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DECLINING ENROLLMENT AND THE PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUESHIP OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Declining pupil enrollments and tax referenda such as Proposition 2 1/2 often result in the retrenchment of personnel. The study explored teacher responses to prevailing staff reduction criteria and procedures during a period of widespread layoffs. If performance evaluations are used, will teachers seek participation in staff employment and assessment decisions? Will they pressure administrators to apply seniority rather than performance criteria? The study investigated teacher preferences on these matters by following a sample of more than 80 schools in 16 Massachusetts school districts. Data were gathered from surveys and interviews with administrators and teachers supplemented by district documents, local news reports, and personal observation of school board meetings.

Two preference indices, colleague participation in personnel decisions and colleague evaluation, were constructed from correlated items in the surveys. After grouping districts by enrollment decline or stability and by reduction policies, an analysis of variance revealed that teachers facing performance-based layoffs consistently showed the strongest preference for influencing, through informal and sometimes formal administrative consultation, personnel appointments and releases. These same respondents gave the weakest support for colleague evaluation. However, the majority of the entire sample looked favorably on some kind of peer review or input into performance evaluations.

While interview data with principals and teachers showed considerable approval for including performance in layoff

decisions, serious shortcomings in the evaluation process are also evident. Administrative attempts to quantify and exactly rank staff contributions to learning of children or to system needs can cause statistical abuses and teacher discontent.

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PREFACE

Although educational scholars and practitioners have written extensively about the effects of declining pupil enrollments on programs and personnel, teacher responses to these effects have rarely been studied. With this in mind I proposed to the National Institute of Education to conduct a systematic, long-term investigation of the impact of declining enrollment and staff contraction on teacher work relationships, attitudes, and preferences. As the study progressed, the focus shifted from internal school outcomes such as staff competition to teacher responses to external community pressure for the appointment, retention, and professional growth of the most competent individuals. Two critical questions came to the floor: Would teachers seek a greater role in school decisions, particularly those dealing with personnel matters? Second, how would performance evaluations be viewed, especially if their use in layoffs were possible or likely?

A series of papers addressing these questions make up the body of the report. The first paper investigates teacher preferences for participation in personnel decisions, especially following a period of extensive layoffs. The second extends this analysis by focusing on one critical area of involvement, namely staff evaluation. Both papers are being reviewed for publication. The third and fourth pieces deal with teacher and administrative opinions about staffing policies and practices. A central theme here is the relative weight given to measures of performance and to years of service. As noted on the cover pages, one of the papers was published in the Winter, 1983 issue

of the The Peabody Journal while the other appeared in February, 1983 in Education and Urban Society

The report's Appendices contain a description of sampling, survey, and interview procedures together with a copy of the teacher questionnaire

Several individuals offered valuable assistance to the project. NIE Project Officers Fritz Mulhauser and Gail MacColl offered helpful suggestions toward the study's direction. As a statistical consultant, Michael D'Elia helped in the selection of interview subjects and in a critique of preliminary analyses. Robert Dreeben provided important theoretical assessments of early drafts of several papers.

I am particularly grateful to Mary Perron for her patient, skilled typing of letters, instruments and papers. During the project's duration, Anne Burr, Denise Loconte, Alberto Guglielmi, Paul Eaton, and Mary Perron ably completed one or more of the following tasks: distribution and pick-up of surveys, coading and loading data on disk, and running computer analyses. Finally, editorial and moral support were provided by my wife, Mary Claire Phelan.

Staff Reductions and Teacher Preferences for Participation in Personnel Decisions

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"Staff Reductions and Teacher Preferences for Participation in Personnel Decisions"

As long as declining pupil enrollments are not too precipitous, school officials usually rely upon normal attrition to reduce staff. When necessary, a few non-tenured teachers may be released. However, when enrollments drop by 30% to 50% over ten or more years and when nearly all staff members hold tenure, then school administrators must decide: "Who stays? Who goes? On what bases?" Should the more senior teachers be kept while younger, energetic but less experienced colleagues are released? Should other criteria, particularly administrative assessments of performance, be considered? How will teachers respond to the process of mandatory reductions in force (i.e. RIF)?

These questions were addressed in a three year (1980-83) study of the effects of declining enrollments and RIF on teachers. In this paper I will examine the proposition that if: (a) their jobs are threatened by enrollment decline or budget cuts, (b) the process of staff reduction includes measures of performance, and (c) the resulting contacts with evaluating supervisors threaten classroom autonomy, teachers will seek to participate in staffing decisions. A discussion of the theoretical rationale for this proposition will be followed by a preliminary test of its appropriateness.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper's conceptualizaton is derived from research on the organizational dimensions of school systems. Applying Max

Weber's rational bureaucratic model of organizations, Charles Bidwell notes that school systems have formal lines of authority based on a hierarchical ordering of roles.[1] But, a bureaucratic model of organization presumes close coordination of work and centralized control over staff members. Yet the delegation of responsibility from a school board through the superintendent to school administrators and onto teachers in their classrooms often undergoes considerable permutation in communication and implementation. This becomes particularly evident when proposals for changing curricula, e.g. new math, or making more equitable delivery of services, e.g. mainstreaming handicapped children, are adopted by national, state, or local legislative bodies.[2]

The apparent failure, or at least mixed success, of many such efforts at change suggest that school systems only weakly match the goal-setting, operational coordination, and centralized direction typified by a rational bureaucratic model of organization. Consequently, an alternative theoretical formulation in the literature takes individual schools and classrooms to be loosely tied or "coupled" to central district offices.[3] More specifically the work of teaching does not require interdependent contact with colleagues and superiors. Physically isolated from other adults, "teachers usually have considerable autonomy in handling the interpersonal aspects of teaching" including the "timing, pacing and myriad details of classroom management."[4] Moreover such autonomy can also be buttressed by informal work norms inhibiting administrative intrusion into a classroom.

This loosely structured model of educational organization is not incompatible with some elements of bureaucratic control As Ronald Corwin points out, freedom from close supervision does not preclude the use of more subtle, indirect methods of control through rules, shared ideological beliefs, and feedback from parents or students [5] So even if teachers are conceded the right to set the pace and timing of learning conditions, their selection of curriculum content or instructional materials may be constricted by the expectations of administrators or school board members Under these circumstances teachers do not have the authority or self-regulation associated with a professional status [6]

I am not suggesting that teachers are powerless As the recent literature on collective bargaining attests, a district's recognition of staff rights to organize and to negotiate a collective agreement has had an impact on school programs and policies [7] For example, in some cases the work day has been contractually defined into teaching and non-teaching tasks The latter frequently are stipulated as "extra duties," e g monitoring the cafeteria during lunch, which "personnel can choose to perform (if they are sufficiently attractive and rewarding to be worth the effort) but which they can also decline if they wish "[8]

Additional items in such agreements can limit "management's" assignment of pupils, e g through class size, or the number of subject preparations Furthermore as Susan Johnson points out, "principals no longer have the final say in disputes about school policies and practices because grievance

procedures provide teachers the right to challenge administrative actions."[9] Even the threat of a grievance offers teachers some leverage to alter "unreasonable" administrative demands.

In short, the combination of a formally bureaucratic structure but loosely coordinated programs and classrooms and the introduction of collective bargaining and grievance procedures pave the way for a "bargaining" model of school organization. By bargaining model I mean one in which "the everyday transactions between faculty and administrators become unspoken negotiations in which goods or permission or organizational standing is traded for diffuse expectations of legitimacy."[10] For example, a principal may bend the rules to allow individual teachers a professional day or early departure for a medical appointment. In exchange, this administrator likely earns the gratitude and appreciation of staff members. The entire process strengthens the legitimacy of his or her authority to make non-contractual requests, e.g. an extra faculty meeting. At this point the bargaining goes beyond individual social exchanges to encompass more structured relationships of authority and power in the school.

We have then a "legislative" or "political systems" image of school organization in which policy and program interests of administrators and teachers are negotiable.[11] But, why or when will such negoiations occur, given the bureaucratic and loosely structured descriptions of school systems? Although a full response to that question is beyond the scope of this paper, I will investigate teacher dispositions toward a more

active role in personnel policies. More specifically, I hypothesize that the potential or actual use of performance evaluations in making staff reductions raises teacher aspirations for involvement in such decisions. The theoretical rationale for this hypothesis is derived from a combination of RIF policies and changing role relationships between school supervisors and their staffs.

First, with respect to RIF, teachers historically have favored years of service to a district, degrees, and other "measurable" criteria rather than more subjective and ambiguous factors such as performance evaluations. One knows where one stands on a seniority list and can make reasonable estimates of being fired. Teaching certification, educational credentials and total teaching experience can be used to break ties in dates of appointment.

At the same time both instructional and administrative staff will acknowledge that layoffs based on seniority often mean the loss of enthusiastic, creative, and gifted junior faculty.[12] They note the deleterious effects on pupil achievement and program development.

Despite these objections to seniority, a district superintendent and his staff may not want measures of competency or performance to be part of RIF decisions. Basically, they claim they cannot obtain clear and persuasive documentation of staff differences.[13]

But suppose, as occurred in this study, they tried to procure such documentation and directed supervisors to make detailed classroom observations. Discriminating assessments of

performance would be required to identify who stays and who goes. Even if few individuals are ultimately let go, such practices can alter the role relationships between principals or department heads and teachers.

Traditionally, principals tend to make infrequent formal classroom observations, especially of tenured members.[14] Moreover, an evaluator's visit frequently is followed by his or her praiseworthy comments.[15] Even if performance standards are very specific, a principal or department head is far more likely to give "good" or "excellent" marks than "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement." There are at least three possible reasons for this highly favorable assessment of a teacher's work.

First, administrators want to develop cooperative relationships among school staff members.[16] Perhaps, they hope that their positive written comments, or at least the absence of negative ones, will earn them a reciprocal approval and support of teachers.[17] Of course this strategy will fail if the evaluator lacks knowledge and credibility in the eyes of others.

As a second possible reason, the process of evaluation is frequently played out as an innocuous game. In the words of Arthur Blumberg:

> The teacher knows he is going to be observed and evaluated. He tells his students. If they like the teacher, they "take care of him," and the supervisor, who possibly went through the same process as a beginning teacher, observes a good lesson. The teacher gets what he wants, and the supervisor gets what he wants. And the game is over. But nothing really happens.[18]

In effect, an impressive behavioral repertoire is staged for the

observer who notes the positive qualities of the performance.

Finally, supervising administrators may genuinely view themselves as instructional leaders. Their primary objective is to improve instruction and to contribute to the professional growth of teachers.[19] This so-called "formative" role conflicts with a "summative" responsibility to give a final decision about a person's competency. Consequently, many supervisors stress the positive and couch shortcomings in the language of potential growth.

Declining pupil enrollments and staff reductions contain the seeds of change in prevailing work relationships. When performance evaluations are part of RIF procedures, a principal will be called upon to make more summative judgments.[20] As one practitioner put it, his role changed from a coach to an umpire or "less to be helping a teacher improve than to be judging whether a teacher is 'out or safe.'"[21]

Thus, the threat of evaluations being used in RIF decisions transforms the process of supervision from "benign neglect," cooperative reciprocal exchange, or simply a game into a struggle for survival. In the terminology of our organizational models, the stakes of the bargaining between administrators and staff have risen markedly. On the one hand teachers are more likely to grieve over the language and interpretations of written evaluations.[22] On the other hand, a supervisor can influence future employment of even senior members, especially if his assessments of performance are rank ordered and heavily weighted with other RIF criteria.[23]

Since staff reductions are made on a district basis,

uniform procedures and reliable performance ratings become particularly important. However improved standardization of the evaluation process increases the bureaucratic oversight of school roles. How will teachers respond to such pressures for tighter control and less autonomy?

I hypothesize that they will want more input into school decision-making, including staffing questions. Admittedly earlier research has not found strong teacher support for such participation.[24] Personal costs in time and energy can overshadow potential benefits in contributing to the collective welfare of the school. Moreover staff members may not feel their voice will affect the ultimate outcome. Will such views change with the onset of declining enrollment, budgetary restraints, and layoffs?

A partial answer to that question comes from a report on the San Jose Teacher Involvement Project.[25] Each of twelve schools established a faculty council to share decision making with the principal. Although the focus of this collective involvement centered on curriculum and instruction, the passage of Proposition 13 drew teachers' attention to administration of the budget. With respect to the level of participation, a consultative or advisory staff role was more common than the more powerful one of approving or authorizing decisions. However, the authors of the report concluded that "much depended on the issue, the degree to which it affected significant professional interests of the faculty (italics added), and the willingness of the teachers to take risks in assuming responsibility for these decisions."[26]

As hypothesized here, if performance evaluations can be included in layoff decisions and, as a result, supervisory roles threaten instructional autonomy, then instructors are more likely to identify participation in personnel matters with their professional interests. Beside a faculty council, informal individual consultation of a principal with his staff can be a vehicle for teacher influence in appointments, promotions, and layoffs. Or, a teacher's union may seek a more formalized commitment from school districts toward management through a contract requiring the elicitation of teacher views.[27]

Differences in individual background or organizational structure may affect our central hypothesis. Drawing on previous research, we can expect age to be an important factor. Many individuals employed after 1970 "never knew a time without collective bargaining by teacher unions."[28] Consequently they may be more inclined than their older colleagues to seek a formal role in staffing questions. Other background characteristics, such as educational attainment, may reflect personal encounters with the possibility and desirability of democratic, participatory modes of governance.

Turning to organizational factors, research shows that a change from solo-practitioners working in self-contained classrooms to teaching teams in open spaces facilitates colleague interaction. As a result, there are more opportunities for a strong teacher influence over school affairs.[29] Since teaming, particularly joint teaching of lessons, requires collaboration and communication, I shall hypothesize that this organizational arrangement will intensify

staff preferences for shared decision-making

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data Sources

Sixteen school districts geographically spread from Northeastern Massachusetts to Cape Cod were selected in 1980 for participation in the three year study. Eight of these had experienced enrollment declines during the 70's of 10% to 37%. Such declines continued at an average annual rate of 6%.

Eight districts with initially stable populations were chosen as a control group. As the study progressed several of these systems began an annual drop in numbers of one or two percent. Moreover, the 1980 passage of Proposition 2 1/2 meant that a few of these districts released some personnel. Unsettling the relative tranquility sought in a control group, these events have confounded the data analysis.

In addition to enrollment changes the sample represents differing RIF language and socioeconomic composition. Five members of the declining group gave some consideration to measures of performance while the remaining three relied upon seniority. Only three of the eight so-called control group mentioned evaluations in their layoff provisions. Unlike the declining group these districts did not use such provisions.

With respect to socioeconomic composition, median 1980 household income ranged from $14,000 to $28,500. Although suburban communities dominate the sample, four cities and two rural regional districts are included.

Every effort was made to construct a sample that matched changes in enrollment with variations in RIF language and

socioeconomic composition. Since the district sample was not randomly selected, the reader may ask how the study's results can be generalized across Massachusetts or the United States. This question overlooks the primary purpose of the study to explore the effects of differing staffing policies on teachers. In other words, we need more knowledge about teacher responses to alternative educational strategies for coping with organizational contraction.

Wherever possible within each district four elementary schools, one middle or junior high, and half of the high school departments were randomly selected.[30] Adjusting for differences in the grade structure and distribution of schools, and the non-participation of a regional high school, we arrived at a 1980 sample of 89 schools.[31] All classroom teachers in this sample were surveyed each Fall from 1980 to 1982. Response rates of 56% (N = 1,506), 38% (N = 1045), and 38% (N = 1,043) were attained during the respective years.

Despite the inevitable loss of respondents due to the transfers and layoffs of the post Proposition 2 1/2 era, major characteristics of the sample remained fairly constant. Specifically, 66% to 70% of the respondents were female. Sixty-seven percent were born since 1940 and approximately 55% held at least a Master's degree. Not surprisingly, the tenured rate increased from 85% to 90%. The data were equally balanced between the declining population and the "control" group as well as elementary versus secondary grade levels.

Method of Analysis

This paper's object of investigation is teacher

preferences for participation in personnel decisions. The major independent variable is the enrollment and RIF context of each district. After assessing the hypothesized relationship between these variables, I will examine the potential effects of social background differences and organizational variations. Wherever useful, separate analyses by grade level, i.e. elementary and secondary, will be presented.

There are four steps to the data analysis. First, respondents to each Fall survey were asked: "What role do you believe teachers should play on the following?" Among the items listed were: appointment of teaching staff, appointment of school principal, and retention of teachers in case of RIF. Four alternative response categories dealt with the level of preferred involvement, ranging in ascending order from a low of "administrators should make decisions with little or no role for teachers" through informal consultation with teachers and formal consultation to a high of "teachers should make decisions with little or no role for administrators." Since these items had relatively high intercorrelations from .32 to .42, an additive index was computed for each year's data.[32]

Second, I grouped together five contracting school districts which considered performance evaluations in making staff reduction decisions. To test our major hypothesis, I applied analyis of variance to a comparison of this group's preferences with those of teachers in more stable or predictable situations. Specifically, I clustered the data from three districts following strict seniority in their RIF decisions. The remaining eight systems became a mixed or tarnished control

group, impacted to a lesser degree by cuts due to Proposition 2 1/2.

Third, salient background variables were introduced into the analysis. The surveys contained questions on date of birth and educational attainment.[33]

Fourth, as previously hypothesized, staff collaboration in a teaching team may affect preferences for colleague involvement in decision-making. Respondents were asked if they ever belonged to a teaching team and, if so, how often they engaged in joint teaching of a lesson. Each item was separately considered in an analysis of variance.

RESULTS

Will the use of performance evaluations in staff reduction decisions inspire teachers to seek greater influence in personnel decisions? An examination of measures of central tendency for our teacher preference index indicates a rather constant value of approximately 7.0 during the three survey years. Given item response categories and the index's theoretical range of three to twelve, the data suggest that respondents wanted to be consulted, sometimes formally, in decisions to appoint principal or staff or to layoff teachers. Put another way, they were not willing clearly to grant administrators complete control over such matters.

The study's major hypothesis about the impact of declining pupil enrollments, performance evaluations, and staff reductions were tested through separate analyses of variance. Mean scores on our index were computed for three district groups: five contracting with performance evaluations as a RIF criteria,

three with strong seniority protection, and eight belonging to our "tarnished" control group. When these values were entered into an analysis of variance, a significant F ratio ($p < .01$) and an eta of .14 were obtained for the district factor. This variable then accounted for approximately 2% of the variance in teacher preferences.

A more direct test of the study's major hypothesis is found in Table 1. Compared to the control or seniority-governed districts, teachers facing performance-based layoffs consistently showed stronger preferences for influencing personnel appointments and releases. In the fall of 1980, as Proposition 2 1/2 was passed, the mean difference between our two groups of declining districts was .58. This value increased slightly to .75 during the ensuing years.

When grade level was introduced into the analysis, the most significant result occurred among elementary school teachers. The data for each survey are presented in Table 2. Respondents most threatened by the combination of declining enrollments, Proposition 2 1/2, and the consideration of competency-based criteria leaned most heavily toward colleague influence over appointments and releases. Notice that their seniority-based counterparts, particularly in 1981, were much less concerned about teacher involvement. This finding is further buttressed by a sizeable eta of .21 in '80 and .22 in '81.

Interestingly enough 1982 was the <u>first year</u> that mean differences at the secondary level attained a significant F ($p = .01$) and an eta of .14. Observed values followed the

TABLE 1

TEACHER PREFERENCES BY DISTRICT
CONTEXT: MEANS

District Context	1980 Means	N	1981 Means	N	1982 Means	N
Decline and RIF on Performance	7.21	432	7.03	348	7.13	327
Control	6.72	729	6.70	468	6.71	485
Decline and RIF on Seniority	6.63	254	6.28	169	6.38	168
Grand Mean	6.86	1,415	6.75	985	6.79	980

TABLE 2

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER PREFERENCES
BY DISTRICT CONTEXT: MEANS

District Context	1980 Means	N	1981 Means	N	1982 Means	N
Decline and RIF on Performance	7.28	196	7.02	162	6.96	141
Control	6.48	291	6.49	221	6.64	217
Decline and RIF on Seniority	6.48	86	5.88	85	6.19	101
Grand Mean	6.75	573	6.57	468	6.64	459
eta[a] =	.21		.22		.15	

[a]This statistic is equivalent to a simple beta from a bivariate linear regression of the dependent variable on a factor.

hypothesized pattern with our critical group posting a 7.26 score, compared to 6.77 and 6.66 for the control and seniority-based districts.

Compared to the findings reported in Table 2, secondary staff members seemed more inclined toward teacher participation.

Simultaneous controls for other independent factors added to the explanatory power of district context. I hypothesized that younger teachers would want to participate in personnel decisions. Table 3 presents the mean values on our index by date of birth. Individuals born during the 1940's were most willing and those born before 1930 least willing to seek such involvement. However the relationship of age to preferences is somewhat attenuated by the weaker than expected results for the youngest group. Since they were most vulnerable to the dislocating tranfers and layoffs of the 1970's, they may have been reluctant to be committed to greater colleague influence or control.

The independent effect of educational attainment is difficult to determine. The 1980 data, found in Table 4, supports the proposition that increased levels of graduate work will intensify teacher dispositions. However, statistical interaction between education attainment and district context compounded subsequent analyses.

Crosstabulation of the two independent variables disclosed that 65% of the teachers in performance-based districts held a Master's degree by 1982. This figure is substantially higher than the 46.7% and 52.2% obtained from the seniority-based and control groups, respectively. Graduate credits and degrees may

TABLE 3

TEACHER PREFERENCES BY CATEGORIES OF
DATE OF BIRTH: MEAN VALUES AFTER CONTROLLING FOR DISTRICT CONTEXT

ate of rth	1980 Means	N	1981 Means	N	1982 Means	N
950 or later	6.90	354	6.83	204	6.90	227
940-49	6.97	598	6.95	418	7.07	425
930-39	6.83	281	6.64	207	6.53	197
929 or earlier	6.43	177	5.96	99	6.02	109
β^a =	.12		.17		.19	

[a]Values for beta represent the independent contribution of each variable fter adjusting for other factors.

TABLE 4

TEACHER PREFERENCES BY CATEGORIES OF
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: 1980 MEAN VALUES
AFTER CONTROLLING FOR DISTRICT CONTEXT AND DATE OF BIRTH

Ed. Attainment	Means	N
College Degree	6.30	180
Some Graduate Study	6.70	496
Master's Degree	7.03	256
Beyond Master's Degree	7.15	476
β^a =	.16	

[a]Values for beta represent the independent contribution of each variable after adjusting for other factors.

have been viewed as a leverage against possible layoff, wherever length of service was not the only consideration.

Finally, team teaching was hypothesized to have a positive effect on teacher dispositions. The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that present or former membership on a team is a factor affecting the views of elementary school staff. After controlling for the other independent variables, teaming reached Beta coefficients of .12, .14, and .17 in the successive surveys. This result could not be replicated at the secondary level. Nor, did the item on joint teaching provide a significant F ratio ($p < .05$) after the first year of the study. In both cases, the small number of respondents affirming the practice impeded an analysis of mean differences.

DISCUSSION

I have explored one possible response of teachers generated by declining pupil enrollments, budget limitations of Proposition 2 1/2, and the use of performance evaluations in making staff layoffs. Taking the data as a whole, teachers want school officials to at least informally consult with them about appointments and releases. They certainly reject the notion of administrative control consistent with a bureaucratic model of organization.

But, how much influence do they seek? Although our empirical measure is limited by the item response categories, there seems to be a ceiling on the degree of preferred involvement. Despite significant staff contraction in the declining districts, the threatened teachers did not desire professional control over personnel decisions. They may have

TABLE 5

ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREFERENCES BY TEAM STATUS:
MEANS CONTROLLING FOR DISTRICT CONTEXT AND DATE OF BIRTH

Team Membership	1980 Means	N	1981 Means	N	1982 Means	N
Am Now	6.99	211	6.79	145	6.92	130
Was One	6.80	174	6.81	122	6.82	150
Never One	6.49	179	6.28	164	6.25	164
β^a =	.12		.14		.17	

[a]Values for beta represent the independent contribution of each variable after adjusting for other factors.

felt that additional input on their part would not alter the "inevitable" outcome [34] This is especially true if length of servive, educational credentials, or administrative favoritism were overriding factors

Generally speaking, the paper's major hypothesis about the effects of district context was confirmed by the data. Although the passage of Proposition 2 1/2 confounds the impact of declining enrollments, individuals most vulnerable to layoffs based partially on performance showed the highest level of preferred involvement. Elementary school teachers particularly were likely to respond according to the hypothesized pattern. Perhaps, they regarded their supervisors as lacking the specialized knowledge and practical experience to make "soundly based" judgments.[35] As a result, they valued any opportunity to influence an administrator's definition and interpretation of "good teaching."

The supervisor-teacher role relationship is a major intervening variable in the paper's conceptualization. In a separate, unreported analysis, the data did not show a direct link between teacher preferences and formal classroom observations by principals or department heads. However it should be noted that, as late as 1982, less than one-third of the respondents from all district contexts had more than two annual classroom observations.[36] For whatever cause, such supervision does not facilitate perceptions of "soundly based" assessments.

Two other variables, age level and team teaching, were considered in the analysis. Not surprisingly teachers born in

the 1920's and 30's sought less participation than their younger colleagues. As the former retire such differences may dwindle to the range found between the 1940 and '50 cohorts.

As hypothesized, membership on a teaching team moved individuals to a higher level of desired involvement. Specific types of staff collaboration, such as joint teaching or crossgrouping of pupils, did not produce a measurable impact on the dependent variable. Perhaps, as Rudy Johnson reported, the proportion of school staff in highly independent teams is a more important factor for promoting acceptance of participatory forms of governance.[37]

The overall stabiltiy of the findings across three years of severe organizational contraction lends credence to the interpretations. The context of enrollment change and district RIF policy continued to be important even when additional variables were introduced into the analysis. Moreover, an unreported longitudinal analysis of the 1980 and '81 data revealed little individual change in preferences during a critical intervening year. Other forms of participation, e.g. peer evaluation, will be treated in subsequent papers.

NOTES

[1]Charles Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," Handbook of Organizations, ed. James March (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 974.

[2]See Robert Dreeben and Rebecca Barr, "Educational Policy and the Working of Schools," Handbook of Teaching and Policy, ed. Lee S. Shulman and Gary Sykes (New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 81-96. and Seymour Sarson, The Culture of the School and the problem of Change (2d ed. rev.; Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982), pp. 47-60 and 235-59.

[3]See Bidwell, pp. 975-976; William A. Firestone and

Robert E. Herriott, "Images of Organization and the Promotion of Educational Change," Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, Vol. II: Research on Educational Organizations, ed. Ronald G. Corwin (Greenwich, Conn.: Jai Press, 1981), pp. 221-60, and Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," Administrative Science Quarterly, XXI (March, 1976), 1-18.

[4]Dan C. Lortie, "Two Anomalies and Three Perspectives: Some Observations on School Organization," Perspectives on Organizations: The School as a Social Organization, ed. Ronald G. Corwin and Roy A. Edelfelt (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1977), pp. 20-38.

[5]Ronald G. Corwin, "Models of Educational Organizations," Review of Research in Education, ed. Fred N. Kerlinger (Itaska, Ill.: F.E. Peacock, 1974), II, 257-58.

[6]Some educators have expressed skepticism about the feasibility or advisability of a drive toward professionalism; see, e.g., James Covert, "Second Thoughts about the Professionalization of Teachers," Educational Forum, XXXVIIII (January, 1975), pp. 149-154. Thomas McDaniel ("The De-Professionalization of teachers," Educational Forum, XLIII (January, 1979), pp.229-37) among others has classified teaching as a semi-profession. Such distinctions are fruitless. The more important question is: What are the opportunities "for individual self-expression, for free exercise of judgment, and for the self-determination of work activities?"(Robert Dreeben, The Nature of Teaching: Schools and the Work of Teachers (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1970), p. 16.)

[7]Susan M. Johnson, "Collective Bargaining and the Principal," Paper read before the annual meeting of The American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, California, April 2, 1981, pp. 1-29. See also Douglas Mitchell et al., "The Impact of Collective Bargaining on School Management and Policy," American Journal of Education, LXXXIX (February, 1981), pp. 147-188.

[8]Mitchell et al., American Journal of Education, LXXXIX, 156.

[9]Johnson, p. 7.

[10]Charles T. Kerchner et al., "How Teachers Gain Influence in Their Work Place: A Study of the Micropolitics of Legitimacy," Paper read before the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York City, March, 1982, p.19.

[11]William Firestone, "Images of Schools and Patterns of Change," American Journal of Education, LXXXVIII (August, 1980), 459-487.

[12] Susan M. Johnson, "Seniority and Schools," Paper read before the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York City, March, 1982, pp. 10-11.

[13] See Johnson, "Seniority and Schools," p. 18 and William T. Phelan, "Governing Staff Reductions: The Use and Abuse of Teacher Evaluations," Education and Urban Society, XV (February, 1983), 195.

[14] John D. McNeil and W. James Popham, "The Assessment of Teacher Competence," Second Handbook of Research in Teaching, ed. Robert M. W. Travers (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), pp. 218-244.

[15] Susan M. Johnson, "Performance-Based Staff Layoffs in the Public Schools: Implementation and Outcomes," Harvard Educational Review, L (May, 1980), 223.

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[17] Peter Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life (New York: John Wiley, 1967), pp. 66-68.

[18] Arthur Blumberg, Supervisors & Teachers: A Private Cold War (2d ed. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1980), pp. 17-30.

[19] Ibid., p. 17.

[20] Mary L. Arminger, "The Political Realities of Teacher Evaluation," The Handbook of Teacher Evaluation, ed. Jason Millman (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 292-293.

[21] Johnson, Harvard Educational Review, L, 226.

[22] Susan M. Johnson, "Implementing Teacher Contracts in the Schools," Paper read before the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, March 20, 1981, p. 5.

[23] In the present study, a few teachers with approximately 20 years of experience were released largely on the basis of poorly rated performance.

[24] See especially Daniel Duke, Beverly Showers, and Michael Imber, "Teachers and Shared Decision-Making: The Costs and Benefits of Involvement," Educational Administration Quarterly, XVI (Winter, 1980), 93-106.

[25] Vincent Crockenberg and Vincent Clark, "Teacher Participation in School Decision Making: The San Jose Teacher Involvement Project," Phi Delta Kappan, LXI (October, 1979), 115-118.

[26] Ibid., p. 116.

[27]Mitchell et al., American Journal of Education, LXXXIX, 183.

[28]Marshall O'Donley, The Future of Teacher Power in America, (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1977), p. 34.

[29]Elizabeth Cohen, "Sociology Looks at Team Teaching," Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, Volume II: Research on Educational Organizations, ed. Ronald G. Corwin (Greenwich, Conn.: Jai Press, 1981), pp. 181-84.

[30]I first divided elementary schools into (a) traditional and (b) alternative organizational forms. If possible, two of each group were chosen. In one high school, "houses" rather than departments were participants.

[31]The closings of six, withdrawal of two, and addition of four elementary schools brought the 1981 total to 85. This figure changed to 84 in 1982, when a high school stopped participating.

[32]Observations on this index were normally distributed with successive means of 6.86, 6.75, and 6.79. The standard deviation was nearly constant at 1.79 and 1.80.

[33]The response categories for date of birth were: 1912 or before, 1913-1919, 1920-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1950-1959, 1960 or later. Those for educational attainment were: An associate's degree, College degree, Some graduate study, Master's degree, Some course work beyond a Master's degree, CAS or CAGS, and Ph.D or Ed.D.

[34]Duke, Showers, and Imber, Educational Administration Quarterly, XVI, 104.

[35]Sanford M. Dornbusch and W. Richard Scott, Evaluation and the Exercise of Authority (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975), pp. 163-191.

[36]I asked the following question in the 1981 and '82 surveys: "During last year how often were your classes formally observed by your principal, or department head, or other school administrator?" Possible answers were none, 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5 or more times.

[37]Rudy Johnson, "Teacher Collaboration, principle Influence, and Decision-making in Elementary Schools," A report prepared for the stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, School of Education, Stanford University, 1976. Cited by Cohen, Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, Vol. II, p. 183.

Colleague Evaluation and Staff Contraction

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Colleague Evaluation: Constraints and Possibilities

Colleague evaluation of teaching performance has received considerable attention in the educational literature (e g. Bruno and Nottingham, 1976; Moeller and Mahan, 1971; and Roper, Deal, and Dornbusch, 1976). Recently, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983: 30) recommended that "salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review (italics added) so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated." Historically, such proposals have not been endorsed by instructional practitioners (Lortie, 1975; Palker, 1980). As declining enrollment or budget caps force school districts to layoff staff and, in some cases, to include measures of classroom performance in their decisions, how will teachers view a colleague role in the evaluation process? Before considering this question, I shall explore briefly pertinent organizational and normative impediments to peer evaluation.

The organization of schools into self-contained classrooms, directed by solo practitioners, gives teachers considerable latitude in establishing the pace and timing of learning conditions (Lortie, 1977). Physical isolation and a low level of task interdependence reduces the possibility of close supervision (Bidwell, 1965; Lortie, 1977). Under these conditions, teachers tend to develop sentiments supporting individualism or autonomy in the workplace (Lortie, 1975). Such sentiments are strengthened by collective bargaining agreements which limit management prerogatives (Johnson, 1981; Mitchell,

1981). For example, in some districts, the teacher contract establishes parameters for the number of pupils or of course preparations.

Staff norms against administrative intrusion into the classroom contribute further to a belief in autonomy. As Arthur Blumberg (1980:46) observes:

> "It is as though subtle and covert ways are developed by teachers to keep the principal in his office 'where he belongs' and 'leave the teaching to us.' 'Principals get paid to administrate and teachers get paid to teach and there is no necessary connection between the two' is the way the feeling is usually expressed."

Under these circumstances, a principal or department head frequently will make only an occasional, perfunctory observation and evaluation of classroom performance (McNeil and Popham, 1973).

Yet the absence of close supervision presents an anomaly to individuals who value their work autonomy but, at the same time, seek some professional feedback about their effectiveness. An alternative, peer evaluation, is impeded by the tyranny of class schedules and dispersion of classrooms (Blumberg, 1980; Dreeben, 1973). School districts frequently do not give staff the time or access to observe colleagues at work.

In addition to these organizational obstacles, teachers may share normative prohibitions against colleague visitations or even work-related discussions. As Lieberman and Miller (1979:60) point out, there is a privacy ethic whereby "teachers do not share experiences about their teaching, their classes,

their students, or their perceptions of their role with anyone inside the schol building." Apprehensive about the judgments of others, instructors may fear that requests for peer assistance will reflect badly on their competency (Blumberg, 1980).

In short, strong feelings of autonomy and protectionism accompany placement in self-contained classrooms. Alternative organizational structures, e.g. team teaching in open spaces, seem to increase colleague feedback (Cohen, 1981). Moreover, a visible, accessible setting is associated with staff acceptance of evaluations as "soundly based" (Dornbusch and Scott, 1975). With this in mind, we can assume that practitioners will look more favorably on peer evaluation if they have the opportunity to see one another at work.

How will teachers respond to the National Commission's proposed peer review if their school district considers performance differences in RIF decisions? Two opposite reactions are individual withdrawal into a classroom shell and colleague cooperation in influencing performance assessments. In the first case, colleagues are viewed as competitors for one's present position. Worried about administrative assessments of their worth, teachers may become more protective of their turf. In effect, they close their classroom doors and isolate themselves from other professionals (Cody and Clinchy, 1978).

As an alternative to withdrawal, teachers may turn to colleagues for support in combating the stress and job insecurity associated with performance-based layoffs. In effect they treat the situation as a shared ordeal which, in turn, intensifies their feelings of collegial solidarity (Lortie,

1975). If this occurs, two different cooperative strategies are possible. School staffs overtly or subtly may pressure administrators to rely upon seniority in making layoff or retention decisions. Perhaps, teacher threat of legal challenges prompt principals or department heads to declare that there are no measurable differences in staff performance (Johnson, 1982). A subsequent paper considers such a possibility.

Beside redefinition of RIF according to seniority, teachers may seek colleague participation in the observational and evaluative process. This can mean peer review, recommended by The National Commission on Excellence in Education, will be part of district reduction or retention decisions. Or, in a less threatening way, classroom observations among colleagues can lead to discussions about teaching strategies and practices. When this occurs, individuals have the opportunity to perfect their instructional skills before being evaluated by a supervising principal or department head.

This paper will focus on teacher preferences for some form of peer input into the evaluative process. At first glance, such an idea may seem preposterous. Don't teachers highly value classroom autonomy? Why should they permit or encourage peers to develop judgments about their teaching effectiveness and, possibly, to influence administrative deliberations on their job retention? In answering these questions, we should examine supervisory practices and RIF procedures. Supervisors rarely make more than one or two annual, detailed, classroom observations of experienced teachers (McNeil and Popham, 1973).

Data gathered for the present study confirms this pattern, even though subsequent assessments of performance could and, sometimes, did affect retention and dismissal decisions. So, teacher autonomy is already threatened by such circumstances.

Research has shown that increased work visibility is associated with individual acceptance of peer evaluations as soundly based (Cohen, 1981; Dornbusch and Scott, 1975). Admittedly team collaboration is more conducive to such visibility than a self-enclosed classroom. Nonetheless, if teachers have the opportunity to visit, occasionally, a respected colleague's class and vice versa, the concept of peer evaluation is more attractive to them (Roper, Deal, and Dornbusch, 1976). This paper will investigate preferred colleague role-involvement ranging from informal visits and discussions to more formal, reported observations which may be part of RIF procedures.

Research Design

Data Sources

The research in this paper is part of a three year investigation of the impact of declining enrollment on the professional colleagueship of teachers. Beginning with the fall of 1980, I surveyed and interviewed more than 1,000 elementary and secondary teachers in Eastern Massachusetts. While these practitioners do not represent a national population, they work in quite diversified school districts. A description of the sample of districts and schools may be found elsewhere[1]. For present purposes, it should be noted that, during 1980-81, participants were located in 89 schools in 16 school

districts[2]. At that time, eight of these districts had lost from 10% to 37% of their peak enrollment. Such declines continued at the rate of 5% to 7% per year. Moreover, five contracting school systems included teaching performance among the criteria for making staff reductions while three others relied upon seniority. The remaining eight, with relatively stable enrollments, were selected as a control group; although Proposition 2 1/2, a property tax referendum, resulted in some layoffs among these districts.

Wherever possible within each district, I selected four elementary schools, one middle or junior high, and half of the departments in the high school.[3] All teachers who had a minimum of ten pupils at one time and who belonged to one of the sampled units were invited to participate in a series of interviews and surveys. During 1981, two subsamples were created for the purpose of telephone interviews.[4] First I randomly selected 62 individuals from a list of 225 staff members who had been released by one of the eight declining school districts. A second subsample consisted of 81 teachers randomly chosen from 1,350 members of the eight "control" districts. Response rates for the respective samples were 56% (N = 35) and 63% (N = 51).

Each Fall all eligible teachers received a self-administered questionnaire. During the period October 1980 to February, 1981, 56% (N = 1,506) completed this form. After a Spring of mass layoffs, only 38% (N = 1,045) returned usable data for the 1981 survey. A similar result, 38% (N = 1,043) occurred in 1982. Despite the dip in the response rate,

background characteristics of respondents remained fairly constant throughout the study.[5]

Method

This paper investigates teacher preferences for a colleague role in the evaluation process. A preliminary assessment of these preferences was obtained from the following interview question:

> Suppose you were dissatisfied with a principal's evaluation of your performance. Would you favor or oppose a procedure in which a colleague of your choice would visit your classroom and submit a report on his/her observations?

Respondents also were asked to explain their answer. Prominent, reoccuring answers are presented in the next section of the paper.

After reviewing the interview data I revised and included a similar item in the 1981 and 1982 surveys. Teachers were asked how they felt about the following situation:

> Assuming that the individual(s) were acceptable to you, your colleague(s) teaching in the same subject area or at the same grade level should observe you while you teach and (when requested by you or the principal) should submit a report (on his/her observations) to the principal and to you.

Available response categories were strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations and strongly disagree.

Another question put peer evaluation in the context of imminent staff layoffs due to declining pupil enrollments or

Proposition 2 1/2. Teachers were queried about several staff qualifications and experiences that might be considered if their district were forced to release personnel. One of these was "results of classroom evaluations by colleagues." They could answer that this practice should be essential, very important, somewhat important, or not important.

A less threatening and more diffuse colleague role was found in two other items. Specifically, respondents were asked whether or not they would "like to have another classroom teacher (a person acceptable to you) observe you while you teach and talk with you about the observation." In addition to answers of "yes" or "no," teachers could opt for a middle position of "would not object" or "no opinion." The second item stated: "Would you (or do you) like to observe other classroom teachers while they are teaching?" A "no opinion" option was provided along with a clear "yes" or "no."

After finding that the four items were intercorrelated, I applied principal component analysis to create a factor-weighted, additive index. Correlation coefficients and factor weights are located in Appendix A. Frequency distributions and univariate statistics were obtained for each item and for the index itself.

To determine the potential effects of staff reductions when performance is one criteria, I dichotomized the measure of teacher preferences and crosstabulated it with district context. For this analysis, I formed three district groups: five critical declining districts, three declining with seniority only, and eight relatively stable enrollment systems. Along with a chi

square, values for Cramer's V, a contingency coefficient, and eta were calculated. These statistics measure the strength or explanatory power of district context.

Since secondary teachers tend to be more specialized in a content area, they may attribute greater objectivity to colleague evaluations than their elementary counterparts. Consequently, I also crosstabulated teacher preferences by grade level.

Findings

Teacher Interviews

When they are dissatisfied with a principal's evaluation, 75% of those interviewed (N=86) favored a colleague's classroom visit and submission of an observational report. The results were as strong among recently released staff as among control group members. Many teachers liked the idea of a "second opinion" to clarify the issue. For some this meant building a case against school administrators. But, for others, a colleague might "confirm the principal's job evaluation and that means I need to improve."

Several teachers were discontented with supervisory practices. They felt that their principal did not have the expertise or time to receive an accurate picture of their work. In the words of a fifth grade science teacher with more than twenty years of experience:

> I know when I see other teachers, I see things evaluator doesn't see. We had a program where we were supposed to be evaluated often in a year. The principal really didn't have close contact with what you're really doing. They

went to the lesson book and read that. For them, it was a duty to do and get it over with.

A similar view was expressed by a less experienced, recently fired, middle school teacher:

> I think as principal you tend to develop an overall view of teaching and so forth. Another teacher who is in the business all the time may be more objective. A teacher could pinpoint things; be more specific than the principal.

Elementary and high school respondents also mentioned the inadequacy of administrative observations and the possibility of more objective assessments by colleagues.

Not everyone favored peer evaluation. A few felt that administrators should have sole responsibility in this area. Others speculated that friendly colleagues might be logrolling with excessive praise in order to protect their mutual interests. This critique contributed to a recasting of the question for the fall surveys.

Survey Data

Table 1 reports the latest findings for the revised question together with three related items.

Insert Table 1 about here

Fifty-three percent of the respondents agreed strongly or with some reservations to a classroom observation and report by an "acceptable" colleague from the same grade level or subject area. The drop in support for peer evaluation, compared to the

interviews, may be due to differences in question wording. The survey question was more precise but also could restrict the choice of a colleague to a person recommended by a principal. Some respondents may not want the responsibility of vetoing an administrator's selection or accepting a classroom observation by a poorly respected colleague.

When school districts are forced to make staff reductions, 33% of our respondents indicated that classroom evaluations by peers should be considered as "essential" or "very important." An additional 34% gave a weak but positive response of "somewhat important." In short there seems to be limited support for the type of colleagueship proposed by the National Commission.

The findings are particularly surprising in light of the previously discussed organizational and normative constraints on a colleague role. Apparently, many in our sample would like to remove some of these constraints. As can be seen in Table 1, more than two-thirds of them desire the opportunity to observe other teachers while they teach. Moreover, there was little evidence of normative prohibitions against colleague observation and discussion of one's teaching. Although only 27% endorsed such practices, an additional 44% would not object to it. Only 17% gave a clearly negative view.

After creating a factor weighted, additive index from the four items, I computed the appropriate univariate statistics. In 1982, the data were normally distributed with a mean of 3.67 and a median of 3.65 on a scale ranging from 1.83 to 5.38. These indicators of central tendency were slightly higher than those of the prior year ($\bar{X}$ = 3.57; med. = 3.57).

I applied the 1981 median to dichotomize the measure of teacher preferences and to crosstabulate it with district context. The results of this crosstabulation are reported in Table 2. Although a chi square was calculated for both the '81

Insert Table 2 about here

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and '82 data, only the latter was statistically significant at the .05 level. A comparison of the two surveys shows a general drift toward greater acceptance of a peer role in the evaluation process. Still, teachers most threatened by job loss based on administrative assessments of performance appeared less enthusiastic than other respondents. Only 55% of th[illegible] obtained high scores on the index. In short, the anxieties and stress associated with declining enrollment and RIF had not produced a marked, increase in support for a colleague role.

Do the findings imply that declining enrollment and staff reductions dampened collegueship in the critical districts? At this time, we do not have a clear answer to that question. The contingency coefficient and eta for Table 2 were a very modest .087. Whatever association exists between district context and teacher preferences is too small for meaningful interpretation.

I also analysed the potential effects of grade level, i.e. elementary, middle, or high school. The results are found in Table 3. As expected high school teachers showed the strongest

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Insert Table 3 about here

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support for colleague evaluation. However, differences by grade level were significant only in 1981. Moreover, the contingency coefficient for that data set was a weak .076. Consequently, subject-area specialization does not appear to be an overriding factor in determining preferences. Alternatively, elementary instructors may feel they too have the expertise, perhaps based on pedagogical skills, to undertake performance evaluations.

Implications for Research and Practice

Some educational reformers see colleague evaluation as mechanism to strengthen staff competency and to remove incompetent individuals. Teacher leaders frequently identify such practices as devisive and damaging to staff cooperation. Nonetheless the evidence from 16 Massachusetts school districts shows considerable support among teachers for a colleague role in the evaluation process. But, what should that role be? This paper suggests several possibilities, all having important implications for school organization and administration.

First, the interviews tapped strong preferences for a colleague's second opinion if a teacher disagreed with his or her principal's assessment. In practice, a dissatisfied teacher may feel too inhibited to challenge his superior. Conversely, he may use the opportunity to build a grievance against his supervisor. In either case a peer role is quite tenuous and could be divisive for school relationships.

A second more definitive role, presented in the surveys, is more supplementary to than challenging of administrative authority. Specifically, an "acceptable" and qualified colleague routinely makes a classroom observation and, on

request, submits a report to the principal and observed person. The institutionalization of this practice gives teachers greater responsibility for their own professional growth. Clearly, not everyone desires such responsibility. But, the fact that a majority of our sample endorsed the practice is encouraging.

We need additional research into alternative procedures for selection of and report by an observer. I have mentioned the problem of "logrolling" if a teacher chooses the observer. Conversely, they may be intimitated by a principal's choice. Perhaps a faculty team could be organized and be assigned the responsibility of resolving this question (Moeller and Mahan, 1971). Surely, this and other proposed remedies could be explored.

Alternative reporting procedures also should be considered and tested for teacher reaction. We already know that a third colleague role, providing peer evaluation as part of RIF procedures, received lukewarm approval by teachers. Moreover the index of teacher preferences showed the lowest rating when teachers actually faced the possibility of a performance-based layoff. It may well be that colleague evaluation cannot be successfully implemented as long as staff reductions are imminent. We need more research in this area.

Our respondents look more favorably on a peer observer role when we remove it from the context of RIF. A significant number welcome the opportunity to visit other classrooms. These visits can be a forum for experimenting with new teaching techniques and strategies. They also can be a vehicle for valuable feedback from a respected professional.

Class schedules and physical isolation from adults are formidable but not insurmountable barriers to colleague evaluation. A modest program of two or three hours of release time each month could be made available to each staff member. The costs, including the employment of substitutes, could be met by reducing time for workshops, if necessary. Further investigation of teacher response to such proposals will clarify the organizational feasibility of such a colleague role.

Footnotes

[1]See pp. 10-11 of this report.

[2]This figure excludes one non-participating high school. The closing of six, withdrawal of two, and addition of four elementary schools brought the 1981 total to 85. This figure changed to 84 in 1982, when a high school stopped participating.

[3]I first divided elementary schools into (a) traditional and (b) alternative organizational forms. If possible, two of each group were randomly chosen. In two communities both a middle and junior high along with three elementary were selected. Two houses rather than departments were participants in one high school.

[4]The size and composition of each subsample came from a random numbers program created by Dr. Michael Delia, a statistical consultant for the study.

[5]Specifically, 66% to 70% of the respondents were female; 67% were born in 1940 or later, and approximately 55% held at least a master's degree. The tenure rate increased from 85% to 90%.

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TABLE 1

Preferences for Colleague Role: Item Percent in Favor, Mean, and Standard Deviation for 1982 Data

Preference Item	% in Favor	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Observation of Colleague[a]	68%	2.56	.70	1036
Colleague Observation and Discussion[b]	27[c]	3.10	.66	1038
Colleague Observation and Report	53	2.37	.95	1026
Colleague Evaluation and RIF	33[d]	2.08	.94	986

[a]Item was coded; yes = 3, no opinion = 2, and no = 1.

[b]To calculate the mean, yes is recoded = 4, wouldn't object and no opinion = 3, and no = 2.

[c]Only 17% responded no. Forty-four percent would not object, and 11% had no opinion.

[d]Percent "essential" or "very important." An additional thirty-four percent checked "somewhat important."

TABLE 2

Teacher Preferences for Peer Evaluation:

Percent High on Index by District Context

District Context	Fall Survey 1981		1982[a]	
Decline and RIF on Performance	49.3%	(343)	55.0%	(320)
Control Group	48.5	(452)	64.3	(484)
Decline and RIF on Seniority	41.7	(168)	63.5	(167)

Note: Numbers in parentheses = N.

[a] $\chi^2 = 7.43$, $p. < .05$.

TABLE 3

Teacher Preferences by School Level:

Percent High on Index

School Level	Fall Survey 1981[a]		1982	
Elementary	44.0%	(455)	57.5%	(449)
Middle/Junior High	47.5	(236)	62.1	(269)
High	53.7	(272)	66.4	(253)

Note: Numbers in parentheses = N.

[a] $\chi^2 = 6.45$, $p. < .05$.

APPENDIX A

Correlation Coefficients and Factor Weights for Items in Teacher Preference Index

Item[a]	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Factor Weight
1	.41	.34	.29	.34924
2	1.00	.26	.23	.30990
3		1.00	.53	.37769
4			1.00	.36029

[a]Items are numbered in order of presentation in text. Thus item 1 refers to peer observation and possible report; item 2 to peer evaluation and RIF; item 3 to colleague observation and discussion; and item 4 to respondent observation of colleague.

Staffing Policies in Times of Retrenchment: Teacher Opinions

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Introduction

Declining pupil enrollments and voter approval of tax cutting referenda, such as Proposition 2½ in Massachusetts, have sharply intensified the uncertainties and anxieties of administrators and teachers as they try to develop orderly mechanisms of contraction. The likelihood of mandated budget cuts in addition to decreased enrollments have dashed the optimism of many educators that normal attrition (through retirements, resignations or deaths) would take care of position cuts. For many school districts the 1980's have ushered in a period of forced layoffs. As a result, the questions and issues discussed in the paper have become all the more pressing. On what bases will staff be retained or released? Should the more senior teachers be kept while their younger, less experienced colleagues are let go? How will teachers respond to the process of involuntary staff reductions, commonly called RIF?

These questions are of more than passing interest to the thousands of Massachusetts teachers who received layoff notices during the Spring of 1981, to the administrators who made the critical decisions on the number and identity of those notified, and to the parents and pupils who, along with many educators, are justifiably dismayed at the entire proceedings. As illustrated by one Massachusetts school district, called Miltown[1], RIFing can create a whole set of problems yet to be resolved. Miltown's collective bargaining agreement states that six criteria should be applied to staff reductions within the categories of elementary, secondary, and specialists. These criteria are:

(a) length of service in the system, (b) academic and professional preparation beyond minimum certification requirements, (c) certification qualifications and certification(s) attained, (d) subject areas taught, (e) effectiveness in teaching and in related professional responsibilities, and (f) evidence of professional growth. Although the pertinent clause also indicates that length of service will prevail if all other factors are equal, the school committee was determined to locate differences in qualifications and performance. With this in mind, a complicated weighting system was instituted to rank teachers.

With respect to performance, administrators rated teachers on a five point scale (i.e. unacceptable, needs to improve, acceptable, commendable, and superior) applied to each of the following areas: teaching methods, teacher - student relationships, classroom management and organization, student intellectual climate, and professional responsibilities. After assigning weights of 1.0 to the first three areas and .5 to the others, a summative score was calculated. Of the six criteria measured, this score statistically received the highest weight in the overall ranking system.

To further complicate the situation, administrators did not complete the evaluations and appropriate rankings before the May legal deadline to apprise teachers of a possible layoff. Uncertain about the number of position cuts and determined to carry through with the process of evaluation, the school committee voted to send all staff members notices of "intent not to rehire" for the next school year[2]. Later, on June 13th, 350 individuals were told

that their "pink slips" had been rescinded. This left the fate of 53 tenured teachers, many with ten or more years of experience, in limbo.

On July 14t the committee voted actual dismissals for 22 tenured teachers. A few weeks later they determined that an additional 30 positions would be needed to adequately staff the system's educational programs. Threatening to reduce non-educational programs, e.g. athletics, the committee asked a special town meeting to approve the funding. This occurred at a noisy, rancorous session on August 17th. All the confusion, political bickering and ill will generated by the RIFing process left thirteen teachers without a position in September. This figure does not include several individuals who had obtained jobs elsewhere. In addition, several untenured specialists were appointed.

The Miltown school committee and teachers' association eventually reached an agreement toward a more equitable ranking system. Yet many difficulties remain in quantifying staff performances. With enrollments falling and a strict budget cap in place, we can expect educators and parents to continue to discuss the criteria and methods used in teacher layoffs.

Objectives and Assumptions

The educational literature provides a number of suggestions for coping with declining enrollment. Some of the suggestions come from voices of considerable administrative experience (Keough, 1978). However, there is a noticeable gap in our understanding of teaching opinions about alternative staffing policies. With this in mind I have designed a study to elicit the views of teachers (and their principals) toward each of the following:

(1) Encouraging early retirement of senior members.

(2) The granting of unpaid leaves of absence to classroom teachers for work/study experiences in another educational field; e.g. vocational education, career education, guidance, media.

(3) Providing opportunities, i.e. unpaid leaves etc., for teachers to change careers—to leave teaching for positions in private industry or government.

(4) Splitting a position among two or more teachers (i.e. job sharing).

(5) Reducing staff on the basis of seniority.

(6) Using teacher evaluations in RIF decisions.

With respect to staff reductions, we know that teacher associations generally want seniority and certification to be the deciding factors (Sinowitz and Hallam, 1975). Occasionally a dissenting teacher or former teacher (e.g. Clevenson, 1978) proposes that merit be included with years of service in RIF decisions. But, how widespread is this viewpoint? More importantly, under what conditions do teachers favor or oppose a given staffing policy? Can we identify particular procedures which generate support or bring about opposition among staff members? Answers to these questions should help practitioners to develop strategies for maximizing staff cooperation during a period of retrenchment.

Several assumptions guide this research. First, as bureaucratic organizations, schools have a formal division of authority extending from the superintendent to principals and then to teachers. However, physically isolated from adults and freed from close supervision by administrators, "teachers usually have considerable autonomy in handling the interpersonal aspects of teaching," including the "timing, pacing, and myriad details of classroom

management" (Lortie, 1977:33).

Second, job security is a central concern of teachers. As Susan Moore Johnson (1981:5) found in her research: "When asked what issues they might grieve, more teachers responded that they would initiate formal complaints about job security than any other issue; many said that it was the only issue they might grieve." When declining enrollment and budget cuts are translated into staff layoffs, we can expect principals and teachers to be vitally interested in the process of RIFing.

Third, staff evaluations have traditionally been diagnostic, prescriptive and generally non-punitive. Furthermore, written comments are likely to emphasize positive qualities and competencies. If a principal or department head is expected to make very discriminating assessments which will be included in layoff decisions, then controversies over interpretations are likely. The more so if such assessments and interpretations are derived from a poorly constructed instrument used on one brief classroom visit.

Fourth, a school board's imposition of RIFing policies and procedures may be viewed as an encroachment on teachers' professional status and as a "shared ordeal" to be confronted through collegial efforts. If this is so, the school board inadvertently will have created the type of solidarity and collegial feeling found in the established professions (Lortie, 1975:74).

Method

Data Sources

The research in this paper is part of a three year project investigating the impact of declining enrollment on the professional relationships among teachers. Sixteen school districts geographically spread from Northeastern Massachusetts to Cape Cod were selected for participation

in the study. By 1980 eight of these districts had experienced declines ranging from 10% to 37%. The remaining eight had relatively stable or increasing enrollments.

Every effort was made to construct a sample which matched changes in enrollment with variations in RIF language and socio-economic composition. For example, two moderate income communities near Boston had equally sharp contraction (i.e. greater than 30% since 1970-72) in school population but differed completely in retention policies; one with a strongly worded seniority clause and the other with multiple criteria including performance.

Wherever possible within each district, four elementary schools, one middle or junior high school, and half of the high school departments were selected at random[3]. Adjusting for differences in the grade structure and distribution of schools, and the non-participation of one high school, we arrived at a 1980-81 sample of 89 schools. Within each unit, the principal and all regular classroom teachers were invited to participate in a series of surveys and interviews during 1980-83.

During the late winter and spring of 1981, I interviewed 85 of the project's 87 principals and two house deans in one high school. Not surprisingly, only 13% were women. Nearly half (49.4%) of these administrators were born during the Depression. All had attended graduate school and nearly all (88.8%) had taken courses beyond the Master's level. In fact, 34% had earned a certificate of advanced graduate study or a doctorate.

Two subsamples were created for the teacher interviews. With the help of newspaper reports and school board minutes, we were able to identify 255 individuals who had received Spring '81 layoff notices and who belonged to one of the participating schools or departments in the eight declining districts. In two of these school systems the listing of teachers could not be completed until after preliminary notices of intent not to rehire were withdrawn. From the group of 225 RIFed teachers, 62 were randomly selected for participation in the interviews.

A second subsample consisted of 81 individuals randomly chosen from 1,350 staff members belonging to the cooperating non-declining school districts and departments. Although I planned to treat this subsample as a control group, staff reductions caused by Proposition 2½ had affected some of these individuals.

During the period June through early September, I conducted telephone interviews with 56% (N = 35) and 63% (N = 51) of the respective samples. Table 1 shows their expected 1981-82 job status at the time of the interview. While 16 teachers, or 45.7%, in the declining systems who had been released did not expect to be back in the Fall, only six or 11.8% of those in the

Insert Table 1 about here

stable systems expressed a similar fate. Conversely, 66.7% of the non-declining subsample were assured of keeping the same position or voluntarily transferring to another in the system.

There were other notable compositional differences. Not surprisingly 31.4% of the declining subsample had less than four years of seniority compared to the 17.6% of the other group. The respective figures for ten or

more years were 14.3% and 39.2%. The declining subsample also had fewer individuals with at least a Master's degree (i.e. 28.6% to 41.2%) but had a larger proportion of secondary school teachers (i.e. 60% to 37.2%). In the next section of the paper we will consider the relationship of these factors to teacher opinions.

The Interview Instruments

Drawing on the educational literature I asked principals to respond to the following:

> Educators have offered a number of staffing strategies for dealing with declining enrollment. On the sheet which I will give you I have listed some of these strategies. To the left of each please place the number representing your opinion. If you wish you can add comments below each strategy.

After handing them the sheet, several respondents took time to review the list.[4] Most did not make comments but simply indicated whether they were strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, neutral, somewhat in opposition, strongly in opposition. While several strategies were listed, it excluded one on evaluations. I obtained information on this item from the following: "Should teacher evaluations be considered in RIF decisions?" I also asked them to give a reason for their answer.

Unlike the principals' interviews, teachers responded to the following questions over the telephone:

> Many Administrators, School Committee Members, parents and others have various opinions about the best staffing

> strategies to use in the face of declining enrollment (or perhaps 2½). We feel that it is important for teachers to be heard on these matters. For each staffing strategy which I will read to you will you please indicate whether you favor it strongly or with reservations, or are opposed strongly or with reservations, or perhaps you are neutral to the strategy. Also, please tell me why you hold the opinion that you have.

I also asked them the question on evaluations. The focus of this paper will be on teacher opinions, but we will refer to the principals' replies wherever a useful comparison can be made.

Results

The results are summarized in Table 2. As noted there, the sample of teachers in declining systems was divided by their district's staff reduction policy. I expected that respondents in group one would be most concerned

Insert Table 2 about here

about job security and the possible use of relatively subjective criteria in dismissals. Before discussing the findings on this point we will examine strategies designed to avoid layoffs.

Several school districts have established early retirement incentives. Educators have advocated this type of arrangement as a way "for older teachers to leave teaching in a dignified manner, provide retirees with additional

financial security, hold jobs for younger teachers, and sometimes save money for the school district" (National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 1977:15-16). How do our respondents view early retirement? As shown in Table 2, the majority of the principals (83.1%) and teachers (55.6 to 78.9%) who offered a definitive opinion were in favor of it. Subsequent analyses of the teacher interviews showed that greatest support came from women (73% to 52%) and those with less than four (76.5%) or more than 10 years (72.7%) of service to the district (compared to 55.2% for the middle group). What do these figures mean?

Early retirement allows some turnover in a teaching staff. In the words of one high school teacher, it "would help benefit younger teachers and get newer ideas coming in; more up to date." It is easy to understand then why untenured staff members are in favor. Also, their most experienced colleagues may be tired of teaching and be attracted by the financial incentive. However, the differences by sex point to a fundamental reason why early retirement is not a panacea.

Fears that this strategy would be forced on teachers may have particularly bothered men. Although times are changing they are still more likely to consider themselves the major provider in a household. Consequently they are likely to be sensitive to practices which shorten their careers.

Job retraining is another commonly recommended alternative to staff releases (e.g. Keough, 1978; Martin, 1977). Teachers are granted an unpaid extended leave of absence to earn credentials in another educational field, or to try out a job in private industry or government. As reported in Table 2 there was almost universal support for job retraining in an educational field.

The opportunity to leave the classroom for a year and to "branch out" into a new area was very appealing to teachers. Some thought the policy would be abused by individuals whose ultimate goal was employment in business. Teachers were significantly less supportive than administrators in endorsing leaves for careers outside education.

Another mechanism for avoiding RIF is the division of a full-time position among two or more teachers. Joan Kalvelage and her associates describe some possible benefits of this type of arrangement. In addition to cutting positions "without eliminating people" they state:

> Results of empirical research support the generalization that part-time patterns reduce absenteeism, tardiness, staff turnover, overtime costs, and wasted capital investment ... Job sharers in teaching positions claim increased quality and quantity of their work (Kalvelage, et. al., 1978:14).

Returning to Table 2 we see that 75% of teachers located in group one's declining districts and 63% of their colleagues in group two's relatively stable systems favored splitting positions as a means of saving jobs. However, less than half (i.e. 48%) of the principals concurred. School administrators may have agreed with teachers who were concerned about the potential discontinuity in instructor-pupil relationships.

When the reference point for opinion centered on educational careers, the views were more positive. Not only did it save jobs but it "fit a lot of professional women to have children and go back half-time." Perhaps this

reason explains why 71.2% of the women as compared to 45.8% of the men liked the idea of split positions.

If staff reductions must come do teachers want seniority to be the deciding factor? Or should performance evaluations be used? As we see in Table 2, only 25% of teachers in a group one district endorsed seniority. This figure compares to 60.4% of their colleagues in stable or growing systems.

Recalling that our two subsamples differed in teaching experience, we cannot be sure that the results reflect district policies. Many but not all of the group one teachers stood to benefit from considerations other than experience. When I isolated the service backgrounds of all teachers interviewed, I found that 37.5% (N = 16) of those with less than four and 80% (N = 25) of those with ten or more years wanted seniority as the deciding factor. Still there were some interesting reversals of this general tendency.

As one interviewee put it: "I know it's the fairest way to do it (reduce staff) without politics getting into it." She added: "I'm low on the list. It's not going to help me." Two older, more experienced teachers took the opposite point of view. One junior high school respondent felt "the school system should be like a corporation--keeping the best you have." Similarly, a high school teacher stated:

> The best are not always the ones here the longest. It's high time administrators decide to assume the burden of evaluating validly ... They should know who the good teachers are and discriminate among them as professionals.

In sum, proponents of straight seniority considered it the most equitable way to let people go. Otherwise they feared administrative politics or favoritism would govern the process. Opponents wanted to retain "the best" or most competent teachers. They believed that "seniority leaves school staffs with a lot of deadwood." This was also a concern of many principals. In the words of a high school principal: "I fear that if seniority is used as an absolute criterion, education could suffer the loss of talented younger members who provide vigor to the profession."

A clearer view on RIF policies becomes apparent from the responses to the less stringent question on evaluations. Respondents were asked if this criteria should be a consideration. Under this condition 83.3% (N = 18) of those potentially hurt by measures of performance and 69.0% of those in stable systems agreed. Although such approval appeared in all background categories including years of service, the reasons given varied widely.

Some respondents claimed this was the only way to keep the most competent instructors. In the words of a RIFed sixth grade teacher:

> We all have to be judged by merit. I know there is a controversy over different people having different criteria (for evaluations). But I feel everyone has to stand on his or her record.

Other teachers preferred seniority as the deciding factor but, in case of ties, would include evaluations. Still others qualified their support by noting other considerations such as a person's "non-academic" contribution to a school and its pupils. In other words, responses were couched in a

variety of contexts, particularly existing practices of supervision.

For many teachers written performance evaluations are useless. One high school teacher who received an early RIF notice but later resigned, touched upon a key problem:

> If everybody didn't get a glowing evaluation it (evaluation) might make a difference. Some people get more glowing evaluations than others. The court has decided that an "adequate" evaluation is not a reason for dismissal.

Many problems remain in the methods of evaluation. First of all several teachers contend that supervisors do not make an adequate number of observations. Of course they may be unaware of information gathered during informal visits to a classroom. Yet this poses an additional problem.

Even if a principal or department head makes daily or weekly sojourns through classrooms, his or her knowledge of the subject matter or pedagogical techniques may be limited. As a result, personal prejudices could determine judgments. While agreeing that an individual's performance should be included in staff retention decisions, several teachers said they assumed competent administrators were providing such assessments.

A third related problem is the use of a poor observation instrument. Typically, a single page lists instructional skills and professional responsibilities. After each, a principal is supposed to check the app opriate box indicating that performance was outstanding, good, adequate, or needs improvement. There also may be room for brief comments including the reaction

of the teacher observed.

The problems raised thus far are not insurmountable. One district called Preton has developed a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. As their manual states:

> Teacher evaluation is conducted through the use of two components: performance as measured by a set of effective teaching performance standards and rating scale, and the development and implementation of an instructional improvement plan. (Italics added.) The standards and rating scale are a common measure against which all staff are appraised while the instructional improvement plan provides for individualized review of a teacher's growth and development.

Standards are spelled out in detail with many concrete examples given. The observation instrument provides ample room for comments by principals. Supervisory personnel participate in training sessions focusing on the instrument itself, clinical supervision, and classroom observation techniques. Most importantly, teacher supervision and evaluation is an ongoing process designed for the professional growth of staff members.

To sum up, persistent sharp declines in enrollments or "real" budget revenues may require school planners to layoff teachers. Although school districts frequently rely on seniority to guide their decisions, many communities in Massachusetts also include some measure of qualifications or competency. To retain "the best" teachers is a noble objective. However

there are serious problems in present practices of evaluating performance. These problems have mitigated teacher endorsement of evaluations being considered in RIF decisions. The implications of this are discussed in the next section of the paper.

Implications

What does this research mean for practitioners? First and foremost they should not postpone seeking solutions to declining enrollment and budget cuts until staff reductions are required. I have discussed several alternatives to layoffs. Hopefully school board members and administrators will consult with teacher leaders in planning these alternatives to layoffs. Certainly such cooperative discussions will help districts to maximize job security and to retain the most competent teachers.

Another implication of the study is that the majority of principals and teachers want performance evaluations to be included as a RIF criteria. However, inadequate supervision of teaching frequently means poor documentation of performance. For evaluations to become part of the RIFing process, I would argue that the following conditions are minimum prerequisites.

First, administrators and teachers should develop a mutually acceptable evaluation program. Several administrators claim they have tried to do this. But they say union leaders won't have it. Yet teachers in Miltown and Preton did agree to such a program. While Miltown's professionals accepted the inevitability of evaluations, they strongly objected to the weighting system.

Second, staff reductions should not be predicated on one or two classroom observations. Rather, there should be ample time to note and correct pedagogical weaknesses. For example, in Preton each teacher's instructional improvement plan is developed with the help of the principal. Target dates for professional growth are noted. Most importantly, developmental activities are not limited to university courses. Included are:

> visitations to other classrooms, weekly meetings with a department head, development of learning activity packets ... team planning sessions, or the use of a formalized system such as interaction analysis to measure student-teacher and student-student interaction.

Third, a good evaluation program demands continual updating of supervisory skills. Principals and department heads should participate periodically in training sessions.

At this point cost conscious readers are saying, "How can we afford such an evaluation program?" I will address that point more thoroughly in future papers. Let me just say now that inadequate administrative supervision of and assistance to teachers results in years of less effective teaching. Quite frankly, how much does even one "piece of deadwood" cost a school system and its students?

If a school district does not want to fund a comprehensive evaluation program, I strongly recommend that seniority or years of service be the major criteria for determining RIF decisions. Of course, consideration should

be given to certifications, degrees, and perhaps total years of teaching experience. The evidence gathered so far in sixteen Massachusetts districts suggests that highly arbitrary and subjective measures of performance will evoke staff bitterness and hostility. As I have stated in another paper, "To be fired is difficult enough. Not to understand why one was selected is a tragedy which contracting school systems can ill afford." (Phelan, 1982:20)

Seniority is the most easily understood RIF criteria. Without effective evaluation procedures a school district would be wise to rely on seniority.

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Footnotes

[1]Pseudonyms are used to identify districts and schools. As an additional step to protect the confidentiality of information provided by administrators or teachers, I will interchange pseudonyms for similar social contexts, e.g. urban, working class districts.

[2]This uncertainty was due to several factors. A town meeting had yet to be held to approve the 81-82 budget. Furthermore, the formula for state aid to cities and towns had not been worked out in the legislature. Finally, additional revenue was possible—and in fact later obtained, through state approval of an increase in the town's real estate evaluations.

[3]I first divided elementary schools into (a) traditional and (b) alternative organizational forms. If possible, two of each type were then selected. In one high school two "houses" rather than departments were the participants.

[4]See page five for items used in this paper.

TABLE 1

Expected Job Status of Teachers

in Each Subsample

Teacher Subsample Membership	Not Teaching	Uncertain or Involuntary Transfer	Teaching at Same School or Voluntary Transfer
Declining District (N = 35)	45.7%	22.9%	33.4%
Non-Declining District (N = 51)	11.8%	21.6%	66.7%

TABLE 2

Opinions About Staffing Strategies

Per Cent in Favor[a]

STRATEGY	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS		
		In Declining Districts		In Non-Declining Districts
		Evaluations in Contract for Use in RIF[b] (Group 1)	Straight Seniority in Contract (Group 3)	(Group 2)
Early Retirement	83.1	78.9	55.6	62.5
Leaves for Work/ Study in another Ed. Field	90.5	83.3	100.0	87.2
Opportunities to Change Careers (Business or Govt.)	93.1	63.2	77.8	56.5
Split-position	48.0	75.0	40.0	63.0
RIF on Seniority	51.9	25.0	55.6	60.4
Evaluations in RIF	71.8	83.3	50.0	69.0

[a]The numbers of people interviewed were: Principals, 85; Teachers in Group 1, 24; in Group 2, 51; in Group 3, 11. The number of usable responses (answers that could be clearly counted as positive or negative) varied with each question, as people gave neutral or mixed responses. The percentages were calculated from the usable responses.

[b]In Group 1 districts, teacher contracts included performance evaluations as one RIF criterion; not all districts used evaluations in 1981, the year of these interviews.

GOVERNING STAFF REDUCTIONS:

THE USE AND ABUSE OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS

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Declining pupil enrollments and the passage of property tax referenda, such as Proposition 2½ in Massachusetts, have forced many school districts to try to develop orderly mechanisms for staff contraction. In some states the solution is mandated by legislation upholding strict seniority (Zirkel and Bargerstock, 1980). In others, the local district can determine the criteria to be used in staff reduction (RIF) decisions. For example, some weight may be given to quality of service or to the needs of the system.

Unlike seniority, competency-based criteria are not easily measured or interpreted. True, the Supreme Court has recognized the right of administrators to adopt discretionary criteria in RIF decisions. But the courts have consistently demanded that such judgment be enforced by concrete evidence. Fearful of frequent and prolonged legal challenges to "measures" of performance, many districts rely on seniority to make staffing decisions (Johnson, 1982).

Teacher unions also generally prefer length of service to more subjective considerations, like performance evaluations (Sinowitz and Hallam, 1975). However, it is usually assumed that such evaluations are necessarily vague and undocumented. My research on the subject (Phelan, 1982[a]) shows that administrators and teachers will accept a comprehensive, adequately supervised, fairly applied system of performance assessments.

In this paper I will examine school policies and practices which have facilitated or impeded the development of equitable procedures for staff reductions. Specifically, I will address the following questions with respect to RIF:

(1) When do collective bargaining agreements permit the use of evaluations?

(2) How are assessments of performance made?

(3) How do such assessments become part of reduction decisions?

My purpose will be to identify inconsistencies between policy and practice and to suggest remedies for blatant abuses of evaluation. To do this I will draw on data recently gathered from selected school districts and personal interviews with a selected sample of administrators and teachers.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Unlike states with legislative and judicial support for seniority, e.g. Michigan and Pennsylvania, Massachusetts permits each district to propose and negotiate a staff reduction clause as part of a collective bargaining agreement. One major legal constraint is that a tenured teacher may not be fired if he or she qualifies for a position held by a non-tenured colleague. Beyond that we can find wide variation in RIF language. For example, straight seniority or years of service to the district may be the exclusive consideration. Sometimes seniority is limited to categories of certified competence or of prior teaching experience (e.g. elementary, English secondary, etc.). Graduate study and degrees may also be recognized, especially where there are ties in dates of appointment.

When more subjective factors such as performance and needs of the system are added to the reduction language, the relative importance of each factor must be determined. Seniority may be decisive unless there are significant differences in performance among teachers. Frequently this means that two or more years of classroom observations will be brought into the picture. Some districts restrict significant differences to cases of exceptional excellence, e.g. "head and shoulders" over others, or marked incompetence.

Other collective bargaining agreements state that "length of service will be the decisive factor if the Superintendent deems all other criteria to be equal". This means that seniority will prevail unless school administrators can document relative differences in staff members' performances or professional growth. As the Superintendent of one district said to me, "Rarely are all things equal but how do I prove it?". To answer this question he developed a complex rating system which was not part of the contractual language.

Other school systems in Massachusetts assign "no priority" to RIF criteria. Again, there is no indication how differences in performance will be measured.

As long as declining enrollments were not too precipitous, school administrators could be unconcerned about vaguely-worded reduction clauses. Loss of positions was absorbed through normal attrition due to retirements, resignations, and deaths. At worst a few non-tenured teachers were released. However, when the enrollment dropped by 30 to 50% over ten years and more than 85% of the teachers held tenure, school officials had the difficult task of sending layoff notices even to tenured faculty members.

It was under these circumstances that, in 1980, I began a three-year study of teachers coping within differing contexts of enrollment change and RIF policies. Details on the research design can be obtained elsewhere (Phelan, 1982[a]; 1982[b]). For present purposes it's only necessary to note that 89 schools in 16 Eastern Massachusetts school districts agreed to participate in a series of surveys and interviews. By 1980 eight of these systems had experienced declines ranging from 10% to 37%, while the remainder had relatively stable or increasing

pupil populations. Reduction in force provisions also varied, with five of the declining systems giving some consideration to teaching performance.

The study's design was impacted by voter approval of Propostion 2½ in November, 1980. Without going into the details of the legislation, it forced school administrators in some communities to issue hundreds of layoff notices during the Spring of 1981. During this period I had the opportunity to interview principals and teachers about RIFing policies. Specifically, I asked them:

(1) if they favored or opposed reducing staff on the basis of seniority in the district, and

(2) if they felt teacher evaluations should be considered in RIF decisions.

The results are reported in Table 1. As noted there, 51.9% of the

Table 1 about here

principals and as many as 60.4% of the teachers endorsed seniority.

I should add that members of groups one and three were randomly selected from lists of individuals receiving layoff notices. Since many of them were relatively young and less experienced, their fairly weak endorsement of seniority is understandable.

More important to the present discussion is the strong widespread opinion that performance evaluations should be part of the RIF process. Some respondents claimed that this was the only way to keep the most competent instructors. Others would restrict this criteria to cases of ties in seniority. Frequently these responses were couched in a variety of contexts, particularly existing

practices of supervision. More on those practices shortly.

Although still in progress, more recent interviews with superintendents and union leaders reflect the provisions of their respective collective bargaining agreements. An interesting example occurs in a district called Beltville. Despite the firing of several teachers with as much as twenty years of experience, a union poll showed that the majority of the membership opposed straight seniority and favored some combination of seniority and evaluations. In contrast, one union leader in a district governed by a seniority standard strongly favored that arrangement. In his words, "I have not seen one system for evaluation that has worked". This commonly held view will be tested further in at least four districts which actually applied measures of performance to their reduction decisions.

ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

A major part of an evaluation system is classroom observation. On this point the majority of school districts make only a perfunctory attempt to assess or to improve teaching performance. This conclusion can be drawn from a report of a Massachusetts Board of Education Study Committee (1980) which examined evaluation materials submitted by 271 (i.e. 94%) of the state's school districts. As found in Table 2, more than two-thirds of the state's

Table 2 about here

school districts do not train evaluators, do not require supervisors and subordinates to jointly develop goals, do not make evaluation a cumulative process, do not expect conferences before and after classroom observations, and do not provide opportunities for improvement.

Other shortcomings in evaluations are noted in our interviews of principals and teachers. First, typically the items listed in an observation instrument are brief and vaguely worded. Second, despite stated policies, teachers claim their supervisors infrequently observe them, e.g. one or two annual visits to their classroom. Other data tend to confirm this point, but the fault may be the result of organizational overload on principals and department heads rather than individual malfeasance.

Even if a supervisor makes daily sojourns through classrooms, his or her knowledge of the subject matter or pedogogical techniques may be limited. As a result personal prejudices may guide individual assessments. While agreeing that an individual's performance should be included in staff retention decisions, several teachers said they assumed competent administrators were providing such assessments.

One district, called Preton, has developed a comprehensive evaluation program which addresses many of the reservations expressed in the interviews. First, standards are clearly stated with many concrete examples given. Second, the observation form provides ample room for comments by principals. Third, supervisors went through an elaborate training period discussing performance standards and developing observational skills. Organized by an assistant superintendent skilled in classroom supervision, this training included group discussion of videotaped teaching situations, simultaneous classroom observations by two or more evaluators, and the reading of composite reports of previous observations. During the same period this central administrator met individually with the supervisors to help them make meaningful evaluation reports.

The most important component of the program is an "instructional improvement plan". Each Fall supervisors meet individually with staff members to establish goals for professional growth. Target dates are agreed upon and there is a follow-up progress report. More importantly, developmental activities are not limited to university courses. Included are:

> ... visitations to other classrooms, weekly meetings with a department head, development of learning activity packets ... team planning sessions, or the use of a formalized system such as interaction analysis to measure student-teacher and student-student interaction.

On paper at least teachers do know the basis for evaluation of performance and have the opportunity to improve their craft. Of course no system is perfect. Without the time and motivation supervisors will not follow through with the professional improvement plan. I shall have more to say on that point in future papers. For now, we can look at Preton as a useful model of performance assessment.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS IN RIF DECISIONS

Several school districts could and did bypass performance evaluations in their layoff decisions. As Susan Johnson (1982: 18) points out:

> School officials must be prepared to demonstrate before an arbitrator that there are "substantial" differences in two teachers' qualifications and performance, that two teachers are "relatively" unequal in ability and qualifications, that a senior teacher's two unfavorable ratings were procedurally correct, or that a senior teacher is not sufficiently qualified to assume a position. Because such judgments and distinctions are difficult to prove, many districts never initiate them, relying instead on the seniority standard to make choices.

Unable to obtain clear and persuasive documentation of performance differences, the superintendent of Urbanville dismissed more than 100 individuals on the basis of seniority. He did this despite the fact that the collective bargaining agreement stated that length of service can be used only if all other criteria were equal.

In February of 1982 the assistant superintendent of Urbanville offered to the school committee a proposed instrument to rate teachers' performance as Outstanding (excellence is noteworthy in its consistency and exceptional high standard); Standard (quality and regularity of application meets expected professional standards); or Negative (quality or consistency of performance is less than is required for a good teaching practice). He wanted this instrument to be used prior to April 15 when teachers would be notified of their employment status for the coming year. The opposition of Urbanville's staff members was predictable. After much discussion the proposed evaluation system was quietly withdrawn.

Four other districts in our research did use some measure of competency in their RIF deliberations. In 1981 two towns, Miltown and Beltville, introduced a complex rating system. Points were assigned to performance categories as well as to the components of other RIF criteria. Due to the speedy implementation, teachers were unprepared for fine measurements of their work effectiveness. As a result teachers had little opportunity to improve their ratings.

Due to space limitations I cannot go into the details of each case. However, some interesting points can be drawn. Both Miltown and Beltville assigned equal weights to each RIF criteria. With respect to performance,

Miltown applied a five point scale (unacceptable, needs to improve, acceptable, commendable and superior) to each of the following categories: teaching methods, teacher-student relationships, classroom management and organization, student intellectual climate, and professional responsibilities. Theoretically, scores could range from twenty to one hundred. In fact the tendency of principals and department heads to give "glowing evaluations" appeared in Miltown's skewed distribution of values toward the upper end. Many teachers even received a perfect score.

The conversion of this raw data to a common metric, e.g. sixteen points for each reduction criteria, exacerbated the problem of small differences in the evaluations. In effect school officials said: "That principal is an easy marker, so we'll take his lowest score, 85, and make that a zero. As noted by a statistical consultant to Miltown's teachers' association:

> They actually had a situation where, on a 100 point scale a teacher was fifteen points below the maximum. On a converted scale, which was 1/6 the size of the first scale, she was sixteen points below the maximum (personal interview).

Furthermore, the consultant statistically demonstrated before an arbitrator that the measure of performance accounted for 59% of the variance in the overall ranking system. Seniority, on the other hand, achieved the dubious distinction of 8% explained variance.

Both Miltown and Beltville made improvements to their evaluation systems. A year later, Miltown's administrators corrected such inequities by standardizing and equally weighing raw scores on seniority and performance. In like fashion, Beltville's superintendent has provided each teacher with a detailed

explanation of the ranking procedures. Yet at least two difficulties remain with the rating system. First, how can one quantify exactly staff contributions to the learning of children or the needs of the system? Second, how does one deal with relatively insignificant differences, e.g. four or five points, on a performance measure? Miltown and Beltville are grappling with these questions as the two towns enter the third year of probable layoffs.

Preton was another district which used teacher evaluations in their 1982 RIF decisions. However, unlike the previous two cases its contract endorsed seniority, but qualified that criterion with the following:

> . . . If, however, a junior teacher in a department (i.e. secondary field, specialist, discipline or elementary) can be demonstrated by the Administration to be "head and shoulders" above an individual member in the department senior to him, he need not be laid off. The next junior person should be considered for layoff... To establish "head and shoulders" superiority more than one year's evaluation record must be compared.

To determine "head and shoulders" status a panel, consisting of three teachers (nominated by the teachers association), the superintendent and the assistant superintendent, was created. They were charged with the responsibility of reviewing staff files for each category (e.g. secondary English, elementary, etc.) impacted by position cuts. All identifying information had been removed from these files and a code number assigned. After the panel met to define the qualities characterizing a "head and shoulders" classification, they adjourned to individually examine the documents. If they felt that a teacher's qualifications, experiences, and reported evaluations were so outstanding as to make this person irreplaceable, they would record the assigned number on a sheet.

Once the five individuals had completed this task they would reconvene to compare the results. If the same code number appeared on four of the five lists that person would be retained, regardless of seniority. Panel members did not discuss reasons for their selections, but only compared their lists of "head and shoulders" status.

To sum up this case the following characteristics should be noted"

(1) Preton had a comprehensive evaluation system in place by 1980, nearly two years before a tenured teacher was dismissed.

(2) Length of service remained the deciding factor in staff retention unless a less senior member had demonstrated outstanding achievements.

(3) The district made staff reductions without a ranking system which can generate invidious comparisons of teaching performance.

CONCLUSION

I have explored a dismal subject, teacher layoffs. No doubt administrators and teachers wish the problem would go away. Perhaps, they say, a baby boomlet will stop the decrease in pupil population. Or, better economic times will permit some relaxing of stringent budget caps. Even if such optimism is realized, parents and politicians are likely to press for promotion and retention of the more effective teachers.

Clearly, the day has arrived for school districts to promote instructional supervision as a cornerstone of effective teaching. This means that money and time must be set aside for evaluators to develop their observational skills and for teachers to improve their pedagogical talents. Cost-conscious readers

may say, "We can't afford it". My response is, "Can we afford less"? One must consider that stagnant teaching results in loss of both money and time.

With respect to staff reductions, seniority is a predictable and understandable criterion. It avoids the possibility of staff bitterness or hostility arising from the use of arbitrary or subjective measures of performance.

Clearly, if a school board does not wish to fund a comprehensive evaluation program butressed by trained supervisors and by opportunities for teacher development, staff reductions should be governed by criteria such as years of service, certifications, degrees and other similar factors.

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TABLE 1

Opinions About Staffing Policies

Per Cent in Favor[a]

POLICY	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS		
		In Declining Districts		In Non-Declining Districts
		Evaluations in Contract for Use in RIF[b] (Group 1)	Straight Seniority in Contract (Group 3)	(Group 2)
RIF based on Seniority	51.9	25.0	55.6	60.4
Evaluations in RIF	71.8	83.3	50.0	69.0

a. The numbers of people interviewed were: Principals, 85; Teachers in Group 1, 24; in Group 2, 51; in Group 3, 11. The number of usable responses (answers that could be clearly counted as positive or negative) varied with each question, as people gave neutral or mixed responses. The percentages were calculated from the usable responses.

b. In Group 1 districts, teacher contracts included performance evaluations as one RIF criterion; not all districts used evaluations in 1981, the year of these interviews.

TABLE 2

Selected Evaluation Practices[a]

Evaluation Practice	% Following Practice
Training of Evaluators	6.6%
Joint Goal Development	30.3%
Evaluations are Cumulative	32.5%
Conferences Before and After Evaluation	35.1%
Instrument has Space for Noting Specific Resources for Improvement	19.6%

a. Data source is the report of the Massachusetts Board of Education Study Committee "Evaluation of Educational Personnel", 1980.

APPENDIX A SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Enrollment data and union contracts were gathered from more than 30 Eastern Massachusetts communities for the purpose of selecting a sample of 16 school districts. Every effort was made to construct a sample which matched changes in enrollment with variations in staff reduction (RIF) policies and in socio-economic composition. To illustrate, two moderate income communities near Boston had equally sharp contraction (i e greater than 30% by 1980) in pupil population but differed in RIF policies, one with a strongly worded seniority clause and the other with multiple criteria including performance. Similarly, two more affluent middle-class suburbs and one working class city had a 25 to 30% decline but placed a different emphasis on seniority: namely, the last consideration among several, one of many criteria with no priority, and the most important factor. Three other communities shared less severe decline but represented varied RIF contractual clauses and socio-economic composition. Similar heterogeneity appeared in the "control" group.

Since the final sample was not chosen randomly from a pre-existing pool, broad statistical generalizations should not be made. However, the exploratory but purposeful nature of the study means that precise hypothesis testing is less important than obtaining organizational insights and practical implications from teacher responses to declining enrollment and the threat of staff contraction.

With respect to the school sample, elementary units in each district were divided into those traditionally organized

with self-contained classrooms and those with some team teaching or "open space" rooms. If available, two of each type were randomly selected. Random numbers also were used to choose one middle or junior high school and half of the high school departments.

There were a few exceptions to these procedures. Both a middle school and junior high were included in three towns in order to cover grades K through 12. In such instances, only three elementary schools were chosen. Two houses rather than departments were the organizational subunits in one high school. Finally, collective bargaining difficulties eliminated the involvement of one regional high school in a control group district.

Approximately 65% of the targeted districts and 95% of the targeted schools agreed to participate in the study. Replacements were chosen according to the criteric previously discussed.

The study began in September, 1980 with 89 schools in 16 districts. After the 1981 closing of six elementary schools, withdrawal of two others, and addition of four new ones the sample size fell to 85 schools. A further loss of one declining high school occurred in 1982.

In the above units, all regular classroom teachers as well as specialists with at least ten pupils at one time were invited to be part of the project. In at least half of the elementary and middle schools this invitation followed the investigator's discussion of the study's objectives with staff members. In all schools, teachers received a one page prospectus of the study

A similar presentation and invitation were extended to department heads in several high schools

APPENDIX B SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

The scheduling and administration of the Fall surveys were arranged with each school's principal. To save postage, questionnaires were hand-delivered to each school sometime between the end of October and the beginning of December during 1980-82. Wherever possible, a district's participating staff received the questionnaire on the same date. Occasionally events, such as parent-teacher conferences, delayed this administration for one or two schools.

A self-addressed postage-paid (if mailed) envelope accompanied the survey. Respondents were informed that the investigator or his assistant would pick-up completed forms on a date approximately two weeks later. If they wished, they could send the forms directly to the University of Lowell. A cut-off date in March for accepting mailed returns was established.

Responses first were coded, keypunched, and verified and then were loaded on disk for computer analysis. Questions about current grade or subject assignment and on the minimum number of pupils taught were used to eliminate replies from ineligible individuals.

Selected samples of teachers participated in telephone interviews during Spring and Summer of 1981. The principal investigator initially had contacted each interviewee to arrange a mutually convenient time. Questions could be answered in about thirty minutes.

Selected superintendents and teacher association leaders also received a request for an interview. Located in contracting districts, these individuals provided valuable

insights into the making of policies and decisions affecting teacher careers. Only two teacher leaders did not respond to this interview opportunity.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

University of Lowell
One University Avenue
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854
(617) 452-5000

Fall 1982

Dear Educator:

The attached questionnaire is part of a three-year (1980-83) study of changes in pupil enrollments and the career interests and work relationships of teachers in 83 schools in 16 school districts.

Your cooperation and participation will contribute greatly to our 1983 project report to the National Institute of Education. This report will not identify respondents or schools. Rather, it will identify similarities and differences (including changes over the three years) in the professional concerns and responsibilities of nearly 2,000 teachers. Copies of all papers on the study's findings will continue to be made available to your school.

The questionnaire can be answered in 15 or 20 minutes and returned in the accompanying envelope to a designated school pick-up location. It may also be mailed (postage paid) to me at the University of Lowell.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

William T. Phelan
Project Director

P.S. If you mail in the questionnaire, please return it before February 28, 1983.

School Code =

(This number allows us to aggregate responses for each school.)

DIRECTIONS

To answer most questions, place a check mark next to the statement or circle the appropriate number representing your response. A few questions ask for brief printed answers. If any question is not applicable to your situation, put N.A. next to it.

If you wish, you can add comments to your responses. Additional space for this purpose has been provided at the end of the questionnaire.

1. Is this your first time responding to one of our surveys? _____ Yes _____ No

2. Please indicate below the last six digits of your social security number or other numbers you used in previous surveys (e.g. birth date, telephone no., etc.).

X X X - __ __ - __ __ __ __

__ __ - __ __ __ __

3. As far as getting ideas and insights in your work which of the following is most helpful to you, second in importance, and third in importance? Place in the appropriate space: 1 = most helpful, 2 = second, and 3 = third.

(Please rank only three of the items below.)

_____ Graduate-level courses.
_____ Conferences with your principal or department head.
_____ Conversations with colleagues.
_____ Educational magazines or books.
_____ Your students.

4. With respect to your classroom, how would you describe the physical setting?

_____ A classroom separated from other classrooms by walls.
_____ A classroom separated from others by partitions which are usually closed.
_____ A classroom separated from others by partitions which are usually open.
_____ A classroom in an open space area.
_____ Other. _____
(Please specify)

5. Are you teaching this year (1982-83) at the same school in which you were teaching last year (1981-82)?

_____ Yes.
_____ I was on a leave of absence last year.
_____ I was at this school last year but not as a teacher.
_____ This is my first year teaching.
_____ No. I was stationed at another school last year.
_____ Other. _____
(Please specify)

6. Are you usually the only professional (i.e., excluding student teachers and aides) in your classroom? _____ Yes _____ No

7. Would you prefer to be a member of a teaching team (i.e., two or more teachers who regularly exchange students, or share ideas or materials, or collaborate in some capacity)? _____ Yes _____ No

8. Have you ever been a member of a "teaching team"?

_____ Never.
_____ I was a member but not now.
_____ I am now a member.

9. If you are presently a member of a teaching team, please answer questions A through F below. Otherwise go to item 10.

A. How many teachers belong to your team?

_____ 2 _____ 4
_____ 3 _____ 5 or more

B. Does your team have a "team leader"? _____ Yes _____ No

C. What is the maximum number of years that you have teamed with at least one of the teachers in your present team:

_____ Less than 1 year _____ 7-8 years
_____ 1-2 years _____ 9-10 years
_____ 3-4 years _____ 11-12 years
_____ 5-6 years _____ 13 or more years

D. During the last two months, how often have you exchanged pupils with another teacher?

_____ Never _____ Nearly every day
_____ Once or twice _____ Daily
_____ Several times

E. During the last two months, how often did you jointly teach the same lesson with another teacher?

_____ Never _____ Nearly every day
_____ Once or twice _____ Daily
_____ Several times

F. During the last two months, how often did you meet for planning of instruction or evaluation of student progress?

_____ Never _____ Nearly every day
_____ Once or twice _____ Daily
_____ Several times

10. During the last two months, have you had the opportunity to observe other classroom teachers while they were teaching a class? _____ Yes* _____ No

*If you answered "Yes" above, please respond to A and B below.

A. How often have you observed such classes?

_____ A few times
_____ At least once a week
_____ Nearly every day
_____ Daily

B. Did you ever talk about your observations with the teacher(s) observed?

_____ Yes _____ No

11. During the last two months, have other classroom teacher(s) watched you while you were teaching a class? _____ Yes* _____ No

*If you answered "Yes" above, please respond to items A and B below.

A. How often were your classes observed by other teachers?

_____ A few times
_____ At least once a week
_____ Nearly every day
_____ Daily

B. Did the other teacher(s) ever talk with you about what they observed?

_____ Yes _____ No

12. Would you (or do you) like to have another classroom teacher (a person acceptable to you) observe you while you teach and talk with you about the observation?

_____ Yes I (would)(do) like that.
_____ I would not object to that.
_____ No, I (would not)(do not) like that.
_____ I don't have an opinion one way or the other.

13. Would you (or do you) like to observe other classroom teachers while they are teaching?

_____ Yes, I (would)(do) like that.
_____ No, I (would not)(do not) like that.
_____ I don't have an opinion one way or the other.

14. How frequently on the average do you informally share classroom-related ideas or materials with other teachers?

_____ Never
_____ Less than once a month
_____ A few times a month
_____ At least once a week
_____ Nearly every day
_____ Daily

15. A. During the last two months, how often has your principal or department head informally visited your classroom?

_____ No visits
_____ 1-2 visits
_____ 3-5 visits
_____ 6-9 visits
_____ 10-15 visits
_____ more than 15 visits

B. What is the approximate average length of such informal classroom visits by your principal or department head?

_____ Not visited
_____ Less than 5 mins.
_____ 5 - 10 mins.
_____ 11 - 20 mins.
_____ 21 - 40 mins.
_____ More than 40 mins.

C. During a two month period, how often would you like to have your principal informally visit your classroom?

_____ No visits
_____ 1-2 visits
_____ 3-5 visits
_____ 6-9 visits
_____ 10-15 visits
_____ More than 15 visits

D. During a two month period, how often would you like to have your department head informally visit your classroom?

_____ Not applicable. (I don't have a department head.)
_____ No visits
_____ 1-2 visits
_____ 3-5 visits
_____ 6-9 visits
_____ 10-15 visits
_____ More than 15 visits

16. During last year how often were your classes formally observed by your principal, or department head, or other school administrator?

_____ None
_____ 1-2 times
_____ 3-4 times
_____ 5 or more times

17. How many pupils do you teach in your

largest class? _____ No. of pupils In your smallest class? _____ No. of pupils

18. On the average how many hours do you actually teach per week? _____ (Total hours per week)

19. What grade(s) are you teaching during the 1982-83 school year? _____ Grade(s)

20. Did you teach the same grade(s) last year (1981-82)? _____ Yes _____ No*

*If not, what grade(s) did you teach during 1981-82? _____ Grade(s)

21. Are you employed on a full-time basis by this school district? _____ Yes _____ No

22. In our interviews some teachers felt that the principal or department head should be responsible for classroom observations and evaluations. Other teachers wanted peers, parents or students to be included in the evaluation process. How do you feel about each of the following?

A. School administrators (e.g., principal or department head) should be solely responsible for classroom observations and evaluations.

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree with reservations
_____ Disagree with reservations
_____ Strongly disagree

B. Assuming that the individual(s) were acceptable to you, your colleague(s) teaching in the same subject area or at the same grade level should observe you while you teach and (when requested by you or by your principal) should submit a report (on his/her observations) to the principal and to you.

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree with reservations
_____ Disagree with reservations
_____ Strongly disagree

C. Parent evaluations of teaching performance should be included in the overall evaluation process.

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree with reservations.
_____ Disagree with reservations
_____ Strongly disagree

D. At the high school level, student evaluations of teaching performance should be included in the overall evaluation process.

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree with reservations
_____ Disagree with reservations
_____ Strongly disagree

23. Do you agree or disagree that most evaluations of teaching performance are subjective and biased?

_____ Agree strongly
_____ Agree with reservations
_____ Disagree with reservations
_____ Disagree strongly

24. Are you a member of any of the following organization(s)? (Check as many as applicable.)

_____ American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
_____ National Education Association (NEA)
_____ Massachusetts Federation of Teachers (MFT)
_____ Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)
_____ A local Teachers Association

25. During the 1981-82 school year how many meetings of your local teachers association did you attend?

_____ Not a member
_____ None
_____ 1-2 meetings
_____ 3-4 meetings
_____ 5-7 meetings

26. What proportion of the people you see socially are

(a) Teachers at your school?

_____ Most _____ About half _____ Few _____ None

(b) Teachers in other schools?

_____ Most _____ About half _____ Few _____ None

(c) Members of the local teachers association?

_____ Most _____ About half _____ Few _____ None

(d) Not teachers?

_____ Most _____ About half _____ Few _____ None

27. What proportion of your close friends are teachers at your school?

_____ Most _____ About half _____ Few _____ None

28. As of September 1982, how many years of uninterrupted service (including approved leaves of absence) have you given to this district?

_____
No. of years of uninterrupted service to this district

29. Please indicate the total number of years that you have taught in a public school (exclude apprentice teaching or time as an aide or temporary substitute).

_____
Total years of teaching experience in a public school

30. As of September 1982, what is the total number of years that you have been employed in your present school?

_____ 1 year or less
_____ 2-3 years
_____ 4-6 years
_____ 7-9 years
_____ 10-14 years
_____ 15-19 years
_____ 20-29 years
_____ 30 years or more

31. Do you spend all of your working week in this school or do you travel to two or more schools in the district?

_____ Spend all my working week in this school.
_____ Travel to two or more schools during working week.
_____ Other: _____
(Please indicate)

32. How frequently, on the average, have you done the following? (Circle your response to each item below.)

	Never	Once a month or less often	A few times a month	Once or twice a week	Nearly every day	Several times each day	Not a member
(a) Discuss classroom matters with other teachers at your school	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(b) Discuss classroom matters with your principal or department head	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(c) Socialize after school hours with other teacher(s) from your school	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(d) Talk to other teachers about school district policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(e) Talk to the principal about school district policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	
(f) Talk with leaders of your teachers association	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

33. What role do you believe teachers should play in decisions on the following? (Circle your response to each item below.)

	Administrators should make decisions with little or no role for teachers	Administrators should informally consult teachers	Administrators should formally consult teachers	Teachers should make decisions with little or no role for administrators
Appointment of teaching staff	1	2	3	4
Reassignment of teachers	1	2	3	4
Appointment of School Principal	1	2	3	4
Tenure decisions	1	2	3	4
Curriculum planning	1	2	3	4
Instructional techniques	1	2	3	4
Retention of teachers in case of RIF (i.e., reduction in force)	1	2	3	4
Transfer of teachers	1	2	3	4

34. How satisfied are you with the working conditions at your school?

_____ Very satisfied
_____ Satisfied
_____ Dissatisfied
_____ Very dissatisfied

35. What is your highest degree or level of course work?

_____ An associate's degree
_____ College degree
_____ Some graduate study
_____ Master's degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., M.Ed.)
_____ Some course work beyond a Master's degree
_____ CAS or CAGS
_____ Ph.D. or Ed.D.
_____ Other: _____
(Please indicate)

36. When a district is forced to make staff reductions due to Proposition 2½ or declining pupil enrollments, do you feel the following staff qualifications and experiences should be treated as essential, very important, somewhat important, or not important. (Circle your response to each item below.)

	Should not be important	Should be somewhat important	Should be very important	Should be essential
Subject area(s) or grade levels of teaching experience	1	2	3	4
College major or minor	1	2	3	4
Seniority in the district	1	2	3	4
Total years of teaching experience	1	2	3	4
Results of classroom evaluations by administrators	1	2	3	4
Results of classroom evaluations by colleagues	1	2	3	4
Professional development (e.g., courses, workshops or conferences)	1	2	3	4
Other: _____ (Please indicate)	1	2	3	4

45. What are the grade levels of your teaching certificate(s)?

_____ K - 8 _____ 7 - 12 _____ K - 12 _____ Other: _____ (Please specify)

46. Suppose you could go back to your college days and start over again. In view of your present knowledge would you become a teacher? (Check one.)

_____ Certainly would become a teacher.
_____ Probably would become a teacher.
_____ Chances about even for and against.
_____ Probably would not become a teacher.
_____ Certainly would not become a teacher.

PLEASE TURN OVER

47. How long do you want to remain in teaching? (Check one.)

_____ Until retirement age.
_____ Will probably continue until a different job in the field of education comes along.
_____ Until a temporary leave (plan to return).
_____ Uncertain.
_____ Will probably continue until something outside education comes along, i.e.

_____
(Indicate job sought, or print "uncertain".)

_____ Definitely plan to leave teaching for _____
(Indicate your most likely job activity.)

_____ Until forced to leave (due to Proposition 2½ or declining enrollment).

48. If you teach in a high school or in departmentalized elementary or middle grades answer A and B below. Otherwise go to question 49.

A. In what field (English, Math, etc.) are you currently teaching the LARGEST PORTION of your time?

_____
(Name of field)

B. For how many years have you taught in that field? _____

49. Indicate your major field(s) of concentration during college:

Your major(s) _____
(At least 30 credit hours.)

50. Do you have tenure? _____ Yes _____ No*
*If no, go to question 53.

51. During the period January through June 1982 did you receive a layoff notice?

_____ Yes _____ No

52. During the period January through June 1981 did you receive a layoff notice?

_____ Yes _____ No

53. Your Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

54. Date of Birth:

_____ 1912 or before
_____ 1913-1919
_____ 1920-1929
_____ 1930-1939
_____ 1940-1949
_____ 1950-1959
_____ 1960 or later

55. Would you like to participate in any of the following course or degree programs:

A. An advanced degree program in education, e.g., certificate of advanced graduate study or a doctorate?

_____ Yes, definitely so
_____ Possibly so
_____ Probably not
_____ No, definitely not

B. An advanced degree outside of education?

_____ Yes, definitely so
_____ Possibly so
_____ Probably not
_____ No, definitely not

C. Course program or seminars offered by private industry or government (so that you could change careers)?

_____ Yes, definitely so
_____ Possibly so
_____ Probably not
_____ No, definitely not

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ACCOMPANYING ENVELOPE. YOU MAY LEAVE IT AT A DESIGNATED SCHOOL PICKUP LOCATION OR, IF YOU PREFER, MAIL IT DIRECTLY TO ME.

SPACE BELOW IS FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON YOUR RESPONSES OR PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS. (IF NECESSARY, USE REVERSE SIDE OR ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS.)